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VIRTUA COP 2
TEMPEST 2000
SYNDICATE WARS
JOHN MADDEN '97
CHRISTMAS NIGHTS
JEWEL OF THE ORACLE
COMMAND AND CONQUER

CHRISTMAS CRACKER!
DIE HARD TRILOGY

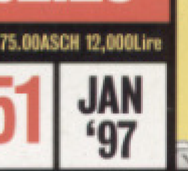
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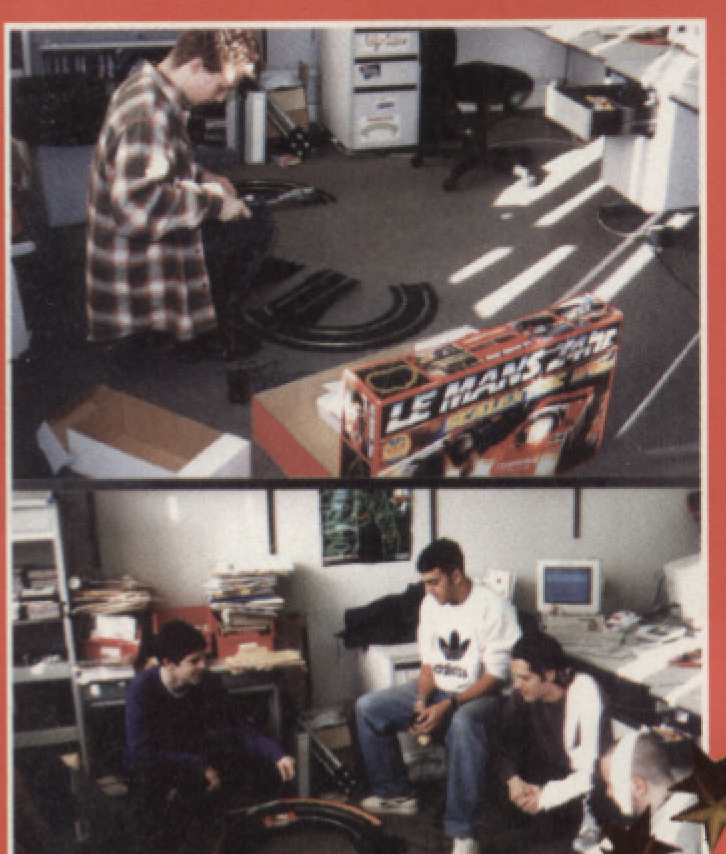


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WIN A TOP OF THE RANGE SCALEXTRIC SET!



Earning a respectable 80%in last month's MEAN MACHINES SEGA, Crimewave is a simple but deceptively engrossing game involving cars, guns and a futuristic 3D revolving city or seven. Take on the ranked forces of evil in your Mark II Interceptor and earn loads of cash for your vigilante-style acts into the bargain. Top!

Now, in conjunction with those nice chaps at Eidos Interactive, we have five top of the range Scalextric sets to give away. The Le Mans 24hr pack is worth over £200, and contains two Le Mans-style supercars, a Porsche 962 and a Sauber Mercedes, with working headlights and sound effects, plus enough track to create loads of exciting course configurations. But enough yackin. Waddya 'ave to do to win?





WINNER'S TROPHIES

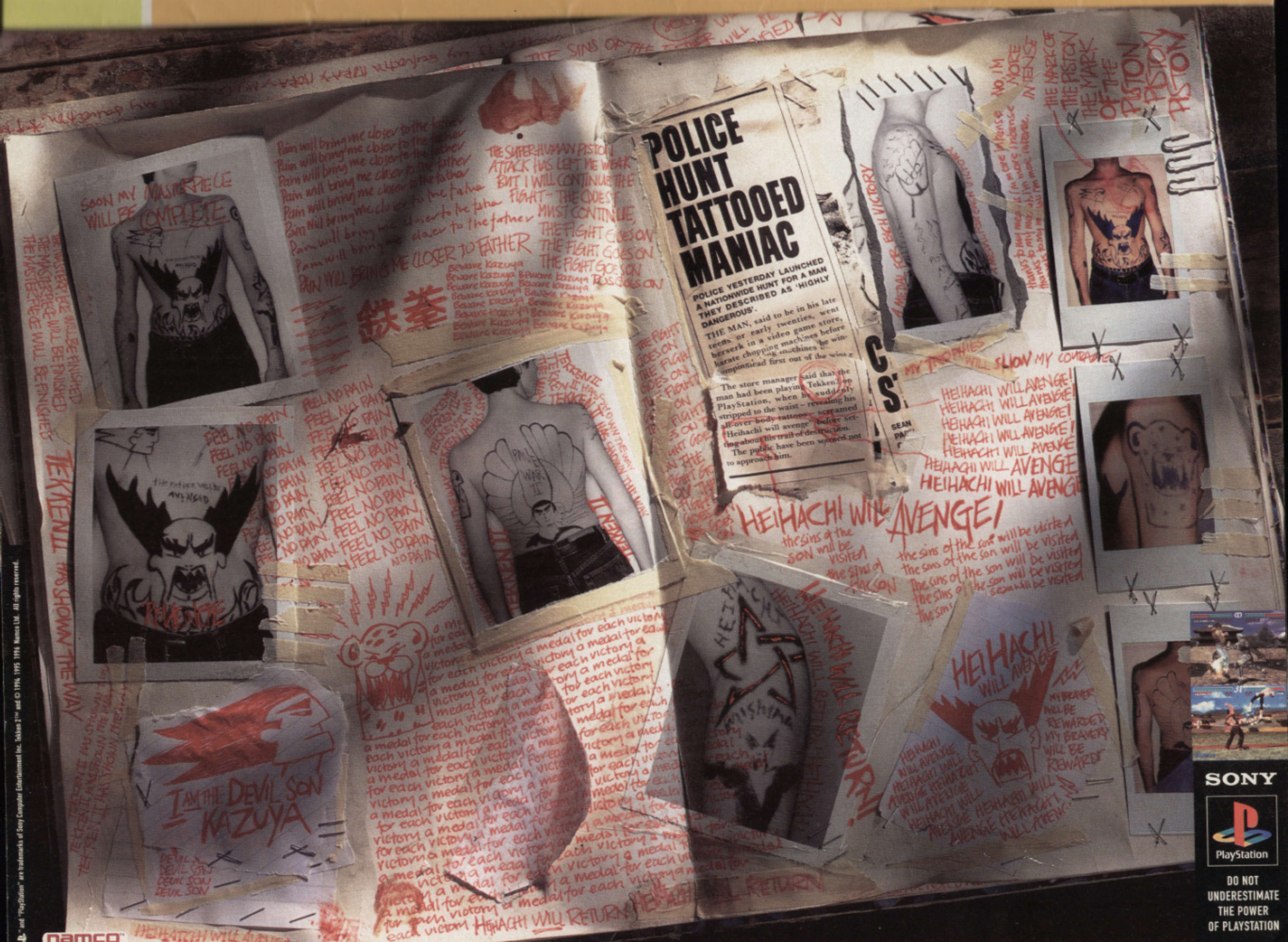
Five lucky entrants will walk, or more likely stagger, away with a Le Man 24hrs Scalextric set plus a copy of Crimewave for their Saturn. Are we good to you or what? To stand a chance of winning, just answer this dead easy question:

How long does the annual Le Mans race last for?

Put your answer on the back of a postcard or sealed down envelope and send it to CRIMEWAVE COMPO, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

THE RULES

1) The closing date for entries is January 10th 1997. Any entries received after that time will be ceremoniously burnt.
2) The competition is not open to employees of EMAP Images Ltd or Eidos Interactive or their families. So don't even think about it Jason.
3) The Editor's decision is final. If we can drag him away from the Scalextric
4) Winners will be picked from the correct entries only.
5) We laugh in the face of multiple entries.


POLICE HUNT TATTOOED MANIAC
POLICE YESTERDAY LAUNCHED A NATIONWIDE HUNT FOR A MAN THEY DESCRIBED AS 'HIGHLY DANGEROUS'.
THE MAN, said to be in his late teens or early twenties, went berserk in a video game store, karate chopping machines before
The store manager said that the man had been playing Tekken2 on PlayStation, when he suddenly stripped to the waist – revealing his all-over body tattoos – screamed "Heihachi will avenge" before setting about his trail of destruction.
The public have been warned not to approach him.
SOON MY MASTERPIECE WILL BE COMPLETE
THE SUPERHUMAN PISTON ATTACK HAS LEFT ME WEAK BUT I WILL CONTINUE THE FIGHT - THE QUEST MUST CONTINUE
THE FIGHT GOES ON
PAIN WILL BRING ME CLOSER TO FATHER
Beware Kazuya
鉄拳
FEEL NO PAIN
TEKKEN II HAS SHOWN THE WAY
THE MASTERPIECE WILL BE FINISHED
I AM THE DEVIL SON KAZUYA
DEVIL SON
a medal for each victory
HEIHACHI WILL RETURN
HEIHACHI WILL AVENGE!
the sins of the son will be visited
HEIHACHI WILL AVENGE
MY BRAVERY WILL BE REWARDED
A MEDAL FOR EACH VICTORY
MY TROPHIES WILL SHOW MY COMRADES
thanks to my medals i'm more intense
NO, I'M MORE INTENSE
THE MARK OF THE PISTON
PISTON PISTON
SONY
PlayStation
DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PLAYSTATION
namco



Well begorrah, if it isn't a right-handed contents page! We're not so set in our ways we can't mess around with our funky new format. And since there's so much content for Christmas let's get on with it.

CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS



REVIEWS



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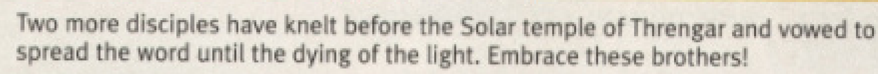
In time everything must change. We're no exception.

First, thanks for the support we've had from you over the redesign of the mag. It's been a good month in that respect, disc problems aside, and in answer to many of your queries, yes we do plan to do it again. You may have noticed that we've stepped back in price. It's to do with offering the best value we can for our readers, and when you compare some of the prices other mags charge for less pages, it's bloody good value. Just as our news section closed, some pictures of the new AM2 Model 3 coin-op appeared. This is a big thing for Sega coin-op fans, and Supercar looks amazing, but I have to admit to being the tiniest bit disappointed that we can expect a racing game as the follow-up to Virtua Fighter 3. The last year has been one of tremendous gameplay innovation in the home, many of the 200-odd Saturn titles testify to that. But I will take some convincing that Supercar is not just another retread down the gameplay formats that AM2 have established with Virtua Racing and Daytona. Sure, these games are technically excellent, but what coin-ops need now is a breath of fresh air — a concept like NiGHTS using that lovely technology and firing the imagination. If any guys can do it, the AM guys can, and lets hope they do over the next twelve months!

GUS

LAST MONTH'S DEMO CD

We'd like to apologise to readers who had some problems with their demo CDs. There is an error on the demo which wipes cartridge memories if they are plugged into the Saturn at the time. No damage is actually caused, but all data is lost. There is no effect on internal memory to our knowledge. We had no prior knowledge of this, as Sega were responsible for all manufacture and testing. If you have had any problems and need information, call Sega on 0181 996 4620. Please DO NOT use a demo disc with a memory cartridge.



SEXY SIX

Two more disciples have knelt before the Solar temple of Threngar and vowed to spread the word until the dying of the light. Embrace these brothers!



CPT. SWAN

Gus' dad sailed the world, bringing gifts and exquisite ornaments from the four corners, which Gus promptly broke. Even to this day, our Editor places a fish finger under his pillow so he can sense the sea. For 'tis said he sailed to Manchester, so he did.
FAVE GAMES:Worldwide Soccer '97; Virtual On; Die Hard Trilogy; Dark Saviour

DTI. YEO

"Awlright Fulljames, let's go over it AGAIN. You nipped out to the sandwich bar without taking my order for large tea with sugar and toast. That's dereliction of duty, toerag!" Matt's Dad is a copper. Like Father, like son.
FAVE GAMES:X-Men Vs Street Fighter; Christmas NiGHTS; Virtua Cop 2; Virtual On



AGENT JASON McEVOY

This information must not be revealed to anyone. Jason's dad worked with spy planes, and under torture he could compromise national security. We've tried Chinese burns on Jason, but it's quite clear he knows nothing. About spies, graphic design or anything. Eat this page after you read it!
FAVE GAMES:Die Hard Trilogy; Virtua Cop 2

PRISONER 'NICK' PATTERSON

Nick 'light fingers' Patterson has always been one step ahead of the long arm of the law. After masterminding the Great Train Robbery, he fled to Spain where he lived for 18 years as a flamenco dancer's guitarist at Ronnie Knight's Sangria club, before coming back to Britain. He was ordered to work here on community service reviewing games for the rest of his unnatural life.
FAVE GAMES:Tomb Raider; Worldwide Soccer '97; Christmas NiGHTS



REV STE FULLJAMES

Stephen's family heritage is full of men of the cloth, and now he's one too — Gus gets him to wipe up his coffee spills with a J-cloth. But Ste's clerical background left him shocked by the depravity and sin of the MEAN MACHINES team when he first arrived: they actually sent out for Mars bars before lunchtime!
FAVE GAMES:Virtua Cop 2; Tomb Raider; Virtual On



PVTE. PHIL DAWSON

Phil's cousin took the Queen's shilling and joined Her Majesty's loyal forces. Phil planned to join the Royal Highland Spud Peelers too, but discovered he could make a mint singing old Fifties hits with a mate uglier than himself. Trouble is, he hasn't yet found that man! Oh, my love...my darlingggg, I hunger for your touch...
FAVE GAMES:Tomb Raider; Virtua Cop 2; X-Men Vs Street Fighter



L.S.D.

know the score

Taking L.S.D. can make you panic and even lead to a permanent change of personality.

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The strengths of trips can vary a lot. There's no way of knowing how much you're taking or what effect it'll have.

Taking L.S.D. could make you feel sick and throw up. This can be really frightening when you're tripping.

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NEWS



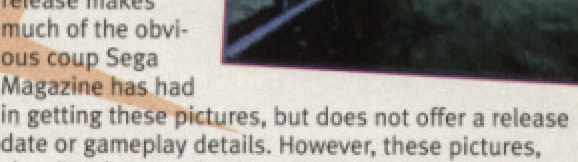
Here is the news. We've scoured the four corners of the globe this issue to bring MEAN MACHINES readers the very latest Sega information as it breaks. Read it and weep!

MODEL 3 'SUPERCAR'











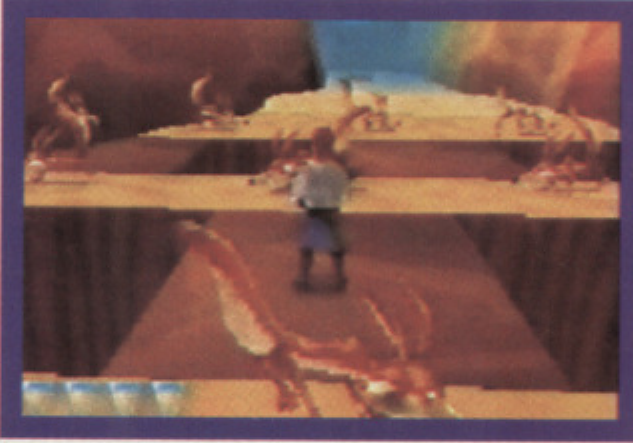


Sega's AM2 R&D Dept. follow-up to Virtua Fighter is, predictably a driving game. The first pictures of Supercar (provisionally titled) were recently released on the AM2 Web site, partly as a publicity boost to the new official Sega Magazine in Japan. Little about the project was revealed apart from the bare facts that it uses the Model 3 board and is being produced by Toshihiro Nagoshi, Assistant Producer at AM2 R&D and formerly producer of the Model 2 Daytona USA in the arcade. The press release makes much of the obvious coup Sega Magazine has had in getting these pictures, but does not offer a release date or gameplay details. However, these pictures, showing the stunning level of detail of Model 3, are enough to be getting on with.

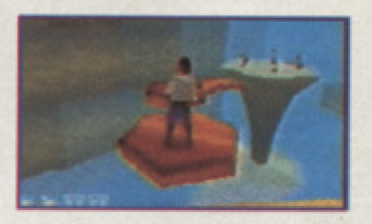
Supercar. Available: '97. Developer: AM2/Sega

RATTLESNAKE RED









Sega has announced what could well be the Saturn beat-'em-up event of the year, Fighters Megamix! Simply put, the game Saturn owners can look forward to is essentially Virtua Fighter 2 Vs Fighting Vipers, with all the characters from both games included. Developer AM2 have also stated that a number of other familiar faces will also be included as well as secret fighters. Since they're responsible for Virtua Cop 1 & 2 and Daytona USA, things could get interesting. The Virtua Fighter characters will have some of their all-new VF3 moves, and the Vipers are getting some new attack patterns too. Stages will be a mixture of Fighting Vipers and Virtua Fighter 2, with walls and fences included. All characters will be able to dodge and perform mid-air recoveries, and the some of the Virtua crew's moves are being upgraded to armour breakers. Also new to the game is a time attack mode, where you only have a set amount of time to complete the entire game! Unbelievably, Fighters Megamix is set for release in Japan on December 21st, so hopefully, hopefully, we'll have more info, and even some pics, next month. We can't wait!

Rattlesnake Red. Release: May '97. Publisher: Acclaim

OUT NOW



TOMB RAIDER
CORE



At last you can get your sweaty palms on Lara Croft. And it was well worth the wait too, as Tomb Raider is one of the best games we've ever seen. No really, it is. And it's got a decent plot, and an extremely cinematic atmosphere to boot.

OVERALL 94

SONIC 3D BLAST



After the confusion earlier this year about what form a Saturn Sonic game would actually take, we now have a copy of Sonic 3D Blast in the office. Basically an upgraded version of the recent Megadrive game this 32 bit version contains more colourful graphics, animated backgrounds and weather effects. Sonic 3D Blast also has a brand new special stage designed by Yuji Naka. We're not allowed to show pictures of it yet, but we can tell you that it is similar in concept to the special stage from Sonic 2, but in high-res 3D with polygonal representations of Sonic, Tails and Knuckles! After seeing this in action, it certainly looks like a healthy sign of things to come.

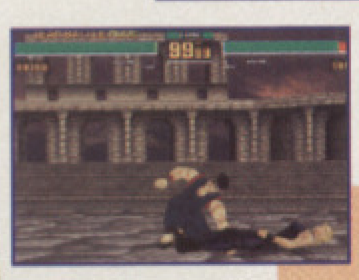




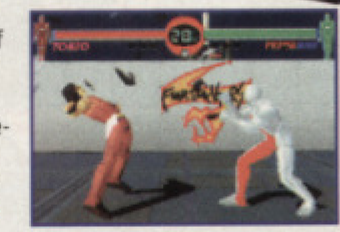


Sonic 3D Blast. Release: February. Publisher: Sega

FIGHTERS MEGAMIX



Sega has announced what could well be the Saturn beat-'em-up event of the year, Fighters Megamix! Simply put, the game Saturn owners can look forward to is essentially Virtua Fighter 2 Vs Fighting Vipers, with all the characters from both games included. Developer AM2 have also stated that a number of other familiar faces will also be included as well as secret fighters. Since they're responsible for Virtua Cop 1 & 2 and Daytona USA, things could get interesting. The Virtua Fighter characters will have some of their all-new VF3 moves, and the Vipers are getting some new attack patterns too. Stages will be a mixture of Fighting Vipers and Virtua Fighter 2, with walls and fences included. All characters will be able to dodge and perform mid-air recoveries, and the some of the Virtua crew's moves are being upgraded to armour breakers. Also new to the game is a time attack mode, where you only have a set amount of time to complete the entire game! Unbelievably, Fighters Megamix is set for release in Japan on December 21st, so hopefully, hopefully, we'll have more info, and even some pics, next month. We can't wait!



Fighters Megamix. Available: December (Japan) Developer: AM2/Sega

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2
VIRGIN



The Street Fighter series keeps on getting better and better. This version adds five new characters, the awesome custom combo feature and plenty of secret stuff too. It's not essential if you have the first Alpha, but it is without a doubt the best 2D beat-'em-up ever.

OVERALL 94

DAYTONA USA CCE
SEGA



It's still not perfect, but it's a more fully rounded racer than the first game, with two new tracks to learn, loads of cars to master and a split-screen two player mode. Plus AM2 have dumped the cheesy music, which did admittedly have its fans.

OVERALL 93

A.M.O.K. / SCAVENGER



A smooth, fast, quirky 3D shoot-'em-up from the alleged über-programmers Scavenger. A.M.O.K. uses clever sprite jiggery-pokery rather than polygons so there's no glitching or graphical mishaps. Scavenger has come up with the goods at last.

OVERALL 88

STREET RACER
UBISOFT



This is the nearest you'll get to Mario Kart on a Saturn. With top quality 3D backgrounds, loads of tracks and a completely mad eight player mode, this'll keep you occupied for months to come. Don't expect a serious racer though, as Street Racer is a bit mental.

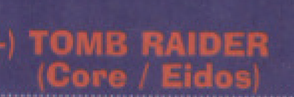
OVERALL 87



X-MEN VS STREETFIGHTER









As the Saturn is the premiere 32 bit console for 2D beat-'em-ups it should come as no surprise to learn that Capcom has announced an exclusive conversion of its current arcade hit, X-Men Vs Street Fighter. Due in early '97, this coin-op classic will not appear on PlayStation (in fact X-Men: COTA was recently canned on Sony's machine) and Saturn owners can expect a near arcade perfect conversion. As you probably already know, X-Men Vs Street Fighter features the might of both Marvel's merry mutants and the World Warriors themselves. Combining gameplay elements from both series, players are treated to super jumps, mid-air combos and special moves, special 'team-up' finishing attacks and multi-level combat. Hopefully the Saturn's internal RAM should be able to cope with the coin-op's intense animation patterns although loading times will probably be noticeable.

SALES CHART: SATURN

The top ten best selling Saturn games this month as compiled by Chart Track:

1 (-) TOMB RAIDER (Core / Eidos)
2 (-) WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97 (Sega)
3 (-) FIGHTING VIPERS (Sega)
4 (9) LOADED (Gremlin
5 (1) NiGHTS (Sega)
6 (4) ATHLETE KINGS (Sega)
7 (2) ALIEN TRILOGY (Acclaim)
8 (2) DESTRUCTION DERBY (Psygnosis)
9 (6) SEGA RALLY (Sega)
10 (8)VIRTUA COP (Sega)

OFFICE CHART

Once all the dross is out of the way, these are the games we just can't stop playing when we ought to be doing some proper work

1 (2) TOMB RAIDER (Core)
2 (-) VIRTUA COP 2 (Sega)
3 (5) VIRTUAL ON (Sega)
4 (-) WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97 (Sega)
5 (-) COMMAND AND CONQUER (Virgin)





X-Men Vs Street Fighter. Release: Early '97. Publisher: Capcom

SEGAWORLD CHART

The games that are getting coins-in-slots down at the Trocadero:

1 (-) VIRTUA FIGHTER 3
2 (2) SEGA RALLY
3 (-) X-MEN VS SF
4 (3) GUNBLADE N.Y.
5 (5) VIRTUAL ON



PROBING FERGUS



Fergus McGovern is Mr Probe — the software company he set up in a back bedroom and sold to Acclaim for millions a couple of years back. When down to see his latest Acclaim project 'Condemned' he offered soundbites on various issues:

On Condemned...

"Everyone who has seen it has been impressed. These guys are the best — the best team we have put together. They've got the basic engine together in three months and now we have a year to get the design and playability right. We'll take note of what everyone says about it, and just add things to it as we go".

On Hexen...

"I'm really pleased with the conversion. It's a great game to do. No, I haven't seen Doom..."

On FMV...

"I hate it. Right, we're never doing FMV again. Well, only a few minutes worth for rewards and endings and stuff. I hate sitting through ten minutes of that stuff at the beginning and then see that's where the last six months work went into — and not the game itself. And you're only going to watch it once, maybe twice. We spent ages doing an FMV intro for Hexen and then id said they didn't like it, didn't want it in!"

On Acclaim...

"The problem with all the troubles has been all the news coming in one year. The company took a huge one-off loss to get out the cartridge market, and that was reflected in the year-end result. It was the same piece of bad news coming twice. But Probe is hiring staff. All those decisions are independent of Acclaim. I set up the 'Condemned' team without telling anyway. When the President of Acclaim came over wanting know what was going on, I showed him what they were doing. He was happy".

On Alien Trilogy...

"Do you know that Alien Trilogy only uses one of the Saturn's SH2 processors? Really!"

On Bubble Bobble...

"We couldn't get the original arcade code from Taito — apparently it's been lost, so we basically adapted the ST version. If you said it was running under Atari emulation, you wouldn't be far off the truth".

NETSCRAPE!

We've been having a good old surf on the Information Super Highway this month and these are our favourite games related sites for December:

1) GAMEFAN
http://www.gamefan.com – Probably the best site for up-to-the-minute games info. They've got a Street Fighter 3 movie too!

2) UK:RESISTANCE
http://www.marso1.demon.co.uk/ukresist.htm – Gadzooks! A British Saturn site. Will wonders never cease?

3) MEAT
http://www.meat.com – Nothing to do with games, but top fun all the same. Home of the Enhanced for Netscape Hall of Shame!

JAPANESE CHART

Those Japs are games mad so they must know the score when it comes to good software. What are they mad for this month?



1 (-) LANGRISSAR 3 (Red)
2 (-) LUNAR SILVER STAR STORY
3 (1) SAKURA WARS
4 (-) ANNALS OF THE 3 KINGS
5 (3 MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM

GOSSIP SHORTS

Your world of Sega gaming condensed like milk and just as tasty...

DIRTY DEVIL

An unholy row has broken out in America over the planned release of Devil Summoner, a conversion of the Japanese platform RPG from Atlus. Christian groups are apparently up in arms about the demon-summoning aspects of the game and a section where you allegedly take on Jesus Christ in battle. Atlus were only known formerly for producing god-awful, not god-hating games like King: The Spirits, but the furore has led to the release being cancelled for the time being.

TOMB TOO

Inevitably, our sources at Core have intimated that work on a Tomb Raider sequel is already 'underway', though this is probably nothing more than planning at this stage. The response to the game in the American press has been phenomenal, and the projected sales in Japan are being put forward as an example of how Brit games can be global successes.

QUAKING IN OUR BOOTS

The latest rumours on the Saturn version of id's Quake is that it will be available in April of 1997, as a Saturn exclusive, secured through Sega of America. There is even talk of locking out Sony altogether from a PlayStation version, but this remains to be seen. Quake is generally regarded as the best 'Doom-style game' ever and has hordes of internet-linked devotees worldwide.

THE KAIN MUTINY

Uncertainty surrounds the destiny of Crystal Dynamics' Legacy of Kain on Saturn. This huge and bloodthirsty action RPG is ready on PlayStation but Crystal claim there was no publisher interest in the States. BMG has always planned to release the game here. Now Activision has stepped in with an interest in the US version, potentially saving the project.

PANDEMONIUM REIGNS

Another Crystal Dynamics game, Pandemonium, is now up for a Saturn conversion. The sumptuous polygon platformer, with a weird hero called Fargus has been PlayStation only all along, but the viability of a Sega conversion is in discussion.

100,000 NET LINKS FORECAST

Sega of America believe they will sell 100,000 Net link peripherals for Saturn before Christmas, after three months on sale. A huge marketing blitz, including free net time, is underway. The unit is planned for the UK sometime in early '97.

BRINGS OUT THE YOB IN YOU



Revolutionary 8 player simultaneous split screen action for Playstation & Saturn (with multi-taps) 4 players for PC CD Rom*

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TERRA PHANTASTICA





A game title that can only be described as 'chi-chi', Terra Phantastica is the latest Japanese attempt to create a European-styled battle RPG. Terra figures in Sega Europe's plans for '97, as it aims to sew-up the serious RPG gamers market. More of that in a forward looking feature next month. Terra seems to be a pretty serious proposition, using complex grid layouts for battlefields and a series of commands for individuals or groups of soldiers to engage in battles. There's a lot of text as well, explaining how the various nations are caught up in conflict. Suffice to say the evil dragon riders are behind it all. The graphic styling is quite good, sort of Gothic Renaissance for the characters and settings. This is one title which will take a long time to translate, so muse on this pictures for another couple of issues.

Terra Phantastica. Release: Mid '97. Publisher: Sega







SALES CHART: MEGADRIVE



The top five best selling Megadrive games this month as compiled by Chart Track.

1 (-) **PREMIER MANAGER '97** (Sega)

2 (-) **TOY STORY** (Sega)

3 (-) **ROAD RASH 2** (EA Classics)

4 (-) **DESERT STRIKE** (EA Classics)

5 (5) **SONIC AND KNUCKLES** (Sega)

CONSTRUCTOR

System 3 are creating a town simulator which could be best described as Sim City with an attitude. Constructor is a wonderfully wicked swipe at '90s Britain, documenting the worst in housing estates, cowboy builders, police brutality and the appalling taste of the urban white trash. Players (the game is designed for PC network) organise teams of workers to build homes and offices in their areas, then set about ruining the neighbourhoods of their rivals, with squatters, yobs, ravers and ghosts who drive the tenants out. The graphics are great on the small scale screen animations, and the larger renders which depict the stereotype characters (spivs, hippies, skinheads etc) going about their business. Leading on the PC at present, they hope to produce a workable Saturn version next year.

Constructor. Release: Summer '97. Developer: System 3.

READERS CHART

You know what you like, and you're not afraid to tell us, as our swelling mailbag shows. Fill in the coupon below to have your say this month!

1 (1) **SEGA RALLY** (Sega)

2 (2) **NiGHTS** (Sega)

3 (4) **VIRTUA FIGHTER 2** (Sega)

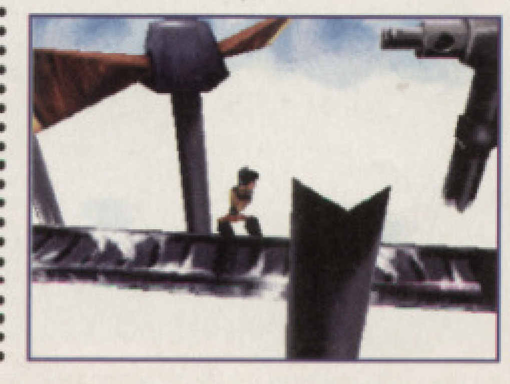
4 (-) **TOMB RAIDER** (Core/Eidos)

5 (-) **FIGHTING VIPERS** (Sega)

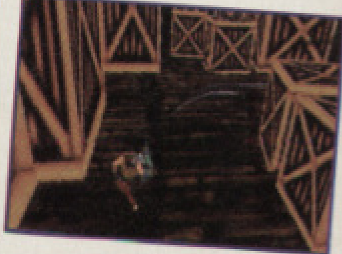
WILD NINES

Work continues apace on Shiny Entertainment's new platform extravaganza. As you can see from these screenshots, the full 3D environment is up and running, as is the main character, Wex, who boasts thousands of animation frames. The game as a whole contains some 60,00 frames of animation which means that it'll move like nothing you've seen before. The game also boasts an intricate storyline, which is too complex to relate here but is on the Shiny web site if you fancy a look (http://www.shiny.com) if you're interested. Hopefully we'll be getting a playable version before long and you'll be the first to know just what this potential corker is really like.









Wild Nines. Release: April '97. Developer: Shiny Entertainment.

CODEMASTERS DOUBLE HITS



Since the days of the Spectrum, Codemasters has had a reputation for releasing top value budget games. Eager to continue that tradition, Codies has announced two new Megadrive 'Double Hits' packs featuring two games on one cart. The first of these features Brian Lara Cricket and the classic Pete Sampras Tennis, while the other contains Psycho Pinball and the original Micro Machines game. What's more, each pack will cost just a measly £29.99! Codemasters are unleashing their Double Hits on the 16th December, just in time for Christmas.

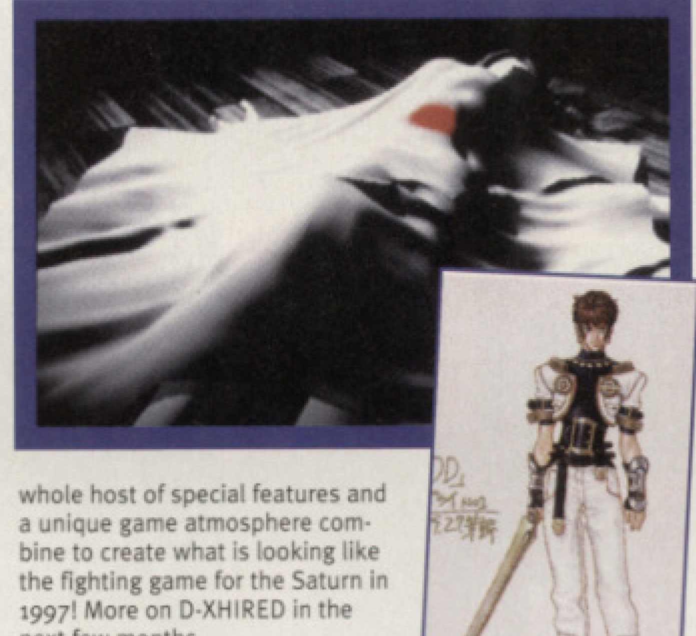




Codemasters Double Hits. Release: December. Publisher: Codemasters

D-XHIRD

At the recent Tokyo Game Show, Takara unveiled for the first time their top secret "DDD" Project. At that time, both the type of game it was going to be and the hardware it was going to run on were clouded in mystery (in fact last month we inadvertently stated it was a rendered 'D'-style adventure. Apologies to Takara) but at last we can release details on this incredible new game. D-XHIRED is a brand new 3D fighting game for the Sega Saturn. Every aspect of this game is completely different from its popular Toshinden series as Takara has gone back to the drawing board to create a refreshingly new and dramatic fighting experience.
Due for release in Spring next year this game has been designed with beginners and experts in mind. A whole host of special features and a unique game atmosphere combine to create what is looking like the fighting game for the Saturn in 1997! More on D-XHIRED in the next few months.



D-XHIRED. Release: Early '97. Publisher: Takara

PSYCHIC FORCE

Psychic Force. Release: February '97. Publisher: Acclaim

Amongst the many licensed titles due to be released by Acclaim over the next six months is a curious import title developed by Japanese software bods, Taito. Psychic Force is essentially a 3D beat-'em-up, the only real distinction here is that players actually fight in zero gravity arenas constructed from psychic energy. Similar in style to Bandai's Dragonball Z series, Psychic Force requires fighters to battle whilst suspended in mid-air, unleashing powerful energy attacks and dodging enemy fire. Although nowhere near as flashy as Fighting Vipers or as technically proficient as Virtua Fighter 2, Psychic Force still retains a solid feel and some impressive visuals. With a UK release already planned for the New Year, we should have a full preview next month.

GOSSIP SHORTS

TOMB RAIDER PACK

There will be a special Saturn and Tomb Raider pack before Christmas, to tackle the planned PlayStation release from November 25th.

JAPANESE OFFENSIVE

Sega is planning a concerted Saturn onslaught on the Japanese market, in a bid to sell another million Saturns by the end of the year. With an installed base around 3.7 million, Sega has been concerned about losing ground to Sony recently.

CONCENTRATING CAMP

The expanding Cafe Cyberia network would like us to bring attention to their Kid Camp weekends. These give you 'young types' tours of the Internet and an introduction to using it. It's run by 'teachers experienced in child care', which is the only downer. Family Connection is for families to explore the net together, including E-mail. Kid Camp: Saturdays 12.30-5.30pm (£5 per hour); Family Connection Sunday 10.30 and 1.30 for 90 minute sessions (£7 adults, £5 children). Bookings: Janet Preston 0171 681 4122 janet@easynet.co.uk

UNGRATEFUL DEAD

You may have noticed a little 'number' called Skeleton Warriors appearing on the shelves. Virgin did not send a copy for review so we were unable to tell you it was complete pants before you bought. We are now able to tell you — it's complete pants.

DESCENT DEAD

Descent on the Saturn. Canned by Interplay. In all honesty, after this wait, who cares?

OY, MEAN MACHINES! WADDYA THINK OF MY CHART THEN?

MY TOP THREE SATURN GAMES ARE:

....

....

....

I'M GAGGING TO GET MY MITTS ON:

....

I RECKON THE MOST POPULAR GAME WILL BE:

....

NAME: ....

ADDRESS: ....

....

Send to: **Readers Chart, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, EMAP Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.**

It's so good, baby when you're at the wheel/ I can't believe the way I feel, it's such a rush just being with you/ we're driving in the rush hour.

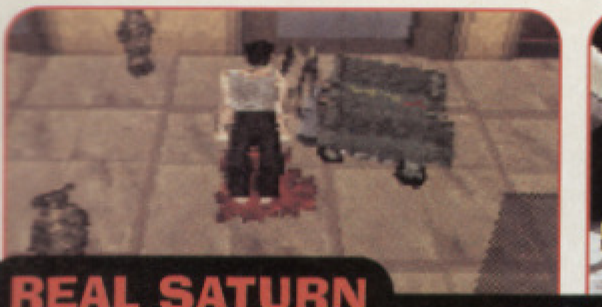
review

Game Name	Die Hard Trilogy
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Release	TBA
Price	TBA
Game Style	Shooting/Driving
Import?	✗
Linkplay?	✗
Players	1
Control	Joypad/Virtua Gun
Background	Three movie licensed games on one disc.

The term '3-in-1 game' is normally enough to strike fear into the heart of any prospective buyer. But Probe did not approach Die Hard Trilogy with such cynical intent. Their idea was to capture on one CD the essence of three distinct movies.



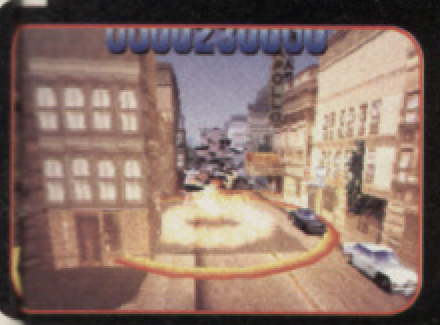
Heard about Die Hard 4? Apparently it's set in a jungle!

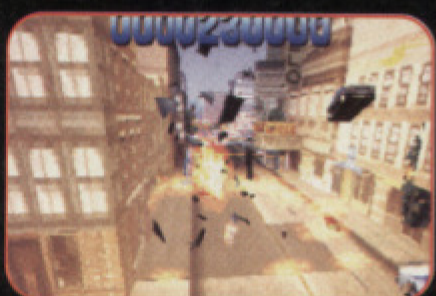




REAL SATURN

This preview uses the real McCoy. All previous 'Saturn previews' of Die Hard Trilogy used generic publicity shots culled from the PSX version.







Die Hard Trilogy is out of step with most of the rest of the seasonal releases. It is a movie license amongst a sea of original titles, sports games and arcade conversions. The decline of the movie license has been swift and steep. Over the last couple of years, few had proved to be big commercial successes and even fewer got anything like a decent crit. But as everyone was moving out of this risky and expensive area of the games market in 1995, one firm was setting up shop. Fox Interactive is a software publishing arm of Fox Entertainment, itself a part of the huge News Corporation owned by that Rupert Murdoch chappie who also owns Sky.

Fox Interactive could afford to get into movie licenses because they owned the licenses to some of the most successful movies of the past decade. They planned to create games for the new consoles, whose technological advances would provide more satisfactory gameplay links with the action in the films — too many movie platform games had brought the concept into disrepute. Their first property to be converted has been Die Hard. Surprisingly, no one had tackled the two major-grossing action movies at the time Fox set about the game. They also knew they were sitting on the third movie instalment, Die Hard with a Vengeance which would appear before the game and revive interest in the series. To provide as much material as possible for gameplay, the Die Hard game was planned to cover the cinematic trilogy, not just one specific episode.

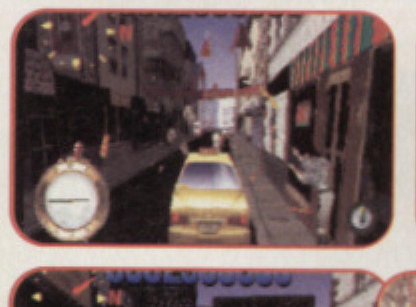
Now Fox needed a developer talented and responsible enough to make the game for them. Naturally they turned to Probe Software in Croydon, who are old hands at the movie license game. Probe was already working on another Fox property – Alien Trilogy, to be published by Acclaim — the last Fox license to be published by a third party. Seeing a script of the third movie, then in production, Probe came up with the idea for a car chase game (refined into the final instalment here), but came to the conclusion that no single game engine or setting could capture enough elements of the three films. So they set about making three games, with the dictum that each would be acceptable as a purchase in its own right; and sensational as a package.



A BIT ABOUT FOX

Lots of Fox licenses have appeared in the past, but DHT is the first to be published by Fox themselves. Here are some other forthcoming properties; The Alien films; Independence Day (20th Century Fox); The Simpsons; The X-Files; (Fox Television).





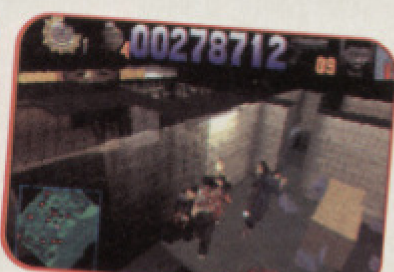




CHOP AND CHANGE

The ultimate objective is to complete all three sections; Die Hard; Die Harder and Die Hard: with a Vengeance, but there's no set order and you can jump between sections at will. There are also ten save slots arranged on your internal RAM, letting you save partially completed games as you go.









A BIT ABOUT PROBE

From '80s computer games development to a multi-million dollar acquisition by Acclaim, Probe are known in the business for getting the job done, however quickly. The have a history of movie games; Alien 3: Stargate; Judge Dredd; Batman Forever, Alien Trilogy are their recent ones, Batman and Robin (the fourth film in the series) is next.

DIE HARD TERROR TOWER

Los Angeles cop John McLane is all set to have a miserable Christmas. Attending the works party of his estranged wife, at the top of the Nakatomi Bank building is bad enough, without the soiree being hijacked by a gang of international thieves led by the ruthless Hans Grüber. McLane happens to be in the loo at the time and proceeds to wage a one man guerrilla war using the lift shafts and conduits that link the huge skyscraper. Soon the crooks realise they have a situation and mobilise their ugliest and heaviest armed thugs to eliminate McLane.



IN THE GAME...

As a vested McLane you start on the basement car parking level of the Nakatomi building and must proceed level by level, killing every terrorist and freeing every hostage. Once each of the twenty levels is clear, a bomb arrives in one of the lifts, with only seconds for McLane to find and defuse it.







OVERLOADED

Die Hard uses a unique playing perspective, a third-person 3D view somewhere between Gremlin's Loaded and Id's Doom. The camera is elevated behind McLane to bring more of the level into view, and the use of progressive transparency effects (pretty close to those used on the PlayStation version) prevents scenery popping in and out of view, or blocking the action.

GUN HO!

McLane's standard weapon is a 15-shot automatic, but he's more than happy to come across some of the other firepower the careless foreign ne'er-do-wells have left in boxes scattered around the building. Machine guns are the big prize, offering rapid-fire and the ability to shoot-up explosive elements like parked cars.

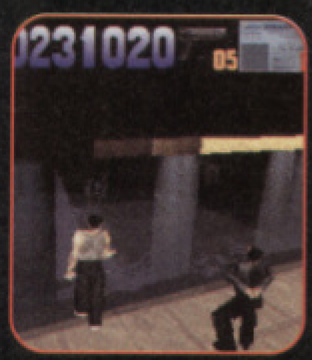






HAPPY TRAILS

The terrorists have taken some of the guests as hostages, and their handcuffed forms are effectively used as human shields in the ensuing gun battles. Touching hostages releases them, but they tend to mill around the play area for some time, seeking an escape route.



HEART OF GLASS

The Nakatomi tower is constructed of glass and steel, so there are lots of windows to break. Gunning down the outside panels and partitions is satisfying, even if the Saturn's cross-hatch effects are poor.





DIE HARD 2: DIE HARDER TERMINAL DECLINE

Christmas Eve, LA-X airport. McLane is awaiting the arrival of his wife from the East Coast for the holidays. The landing is inexplicably delayed, and as he wanders around the terminal, he catches sight of a man on the LAPD wanted list. Meanwhile, LA-Xs air-traffic control are battling to regain control of their computer systems, which have been hijacked by a terrorist group, demanding the release of an imprisoned comrade or threatening to bring the circling jumbos crashing down. McLane soon uncovers the plot as 'his man' is up to his neck in it, and single-handedly sets out to cause co

IN THE GAME...

Save the passengers? Trash the terminal, more like. In a homage to AM2's Virtua Cop, Probe have created a series of airport buildings and surroundings, populated them with innocents and hundreds of terrorists and given McLane some ludicrously powerful weapons to get on with the job. As with 'Cop, target systems are used to pinpoint targets, extra weapons are found in the scenery and McLane can take five direct hits from his enemies. Each level takes a predetermined path, leading to the showdown on the runway as the terrorists attempt to escape in a huge cargo plane.











SKINNING CATS

One pleasant aspect of this section is the way of killing people indirectly, ie. not just shooting them. Shooting roof tiles or monitors to fall on heads within the terminal building is a great laugh.



PACKS A PUNCH



Die Harder packs more weaponry into its levels than Virtua Cop or Virtua Cop 2. The standard automatic is barely used, as shotguns, berettas, M16s, Tracer bullets and explosive rifles reside in every nook and cranny. The player also has a store of secondary weapons; rockets and grenades which effectively wipeout large areas of the screen.

VIRTUA COPY

Sensibly, Probe have taken full advantage of the excellent Virtua Gun, which works when plugged into port 2. This turns an amusing shooting gallery with the Joypad into something really special, and there are no complaints about the lightgun implementation.



GOT A ROVING EYE

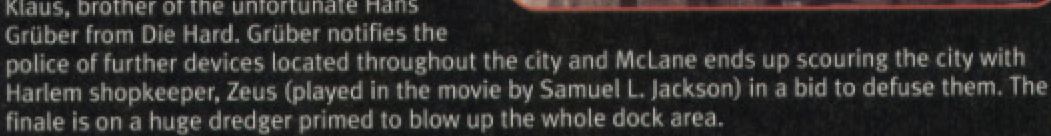
The constant camera motion of Die Harder takes a little getting used to and is most reminiscent of a live news broadcast from a camcorder: all the news as it happens!







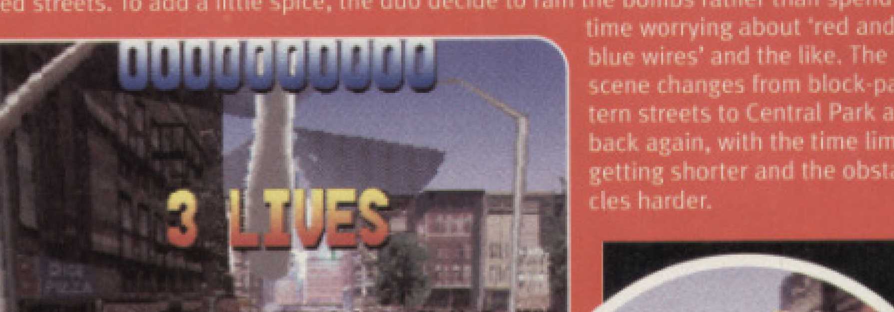
DIE HARD: WITH A VENGEANCE TICK - TICK - TICK - TICK - BOOM!



It's not Christmas. It is in fact New York City and John McLane comes to deal with a bomb scare in a school apparently arranged by Klaus, brother of the unfortunate Hans Grüber from Die Hard. Grüber notifies the police of further devices located throughout the city and McLane ends up scouring the city with Harlem shopkeeper, Zeus (played in the movie by Samuel L. Jackson) in a bid to defuse them. The finale is on a huge dredger primed to blow up the whole dock area.

IN THE GAME...

The gameplay centres on the middle section of the film, as the pair dash around the traffic-clogged streets. To add a little spice, the duo decide to ram the bombs rather than spend time worrying about 'red and blue wires' and the like. The scene changes from block-pattern streets to Central Park and back again, with the time limits getting shorter and the obstacles harder.



WHERE THE STREETS HAVE NO NAME

You have a car, a clock and a compass. You have a few seconds to reach the bomb destination marked on the compass in the car. If you fail the whole city will explode. The lives of a few pedestrians and the bodywork of other road vehicles is not that important.



GIVE ME THE KEYS!

You are not limited to the yellow cab you nicked in the first instance. There are in fact far more useful vehicles hidden throughout each level including a police patrol car, which you'll find in a parking lot. It's faster, and more importantly, has flashing lights and a siren to have fun with.

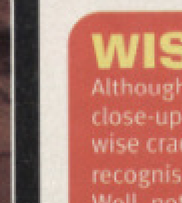
MOVING TARGET

As well as telephone box bombs, some kamikazes are prepared to drive around with explosives strapped to their chassis. You have no alternative but to ram them off the road. One amusing instance involves pursuing a hot dog van through C



BIG BANG THEORY

One worry we had was whether the Saturn could replicate some of the stylish effects used in the PlayStation version of this section. Probe have got around the problem by viewing the bomb explosions from a remote position. You still get all the drama of the explosion. There's a stylish clock effect where the seconds countdown on screen to Armageddon.





WISE GUYS

Although Brucey boy doesn't actually appear close-up in the game, there are tons of sampled wise cracks that fans of the movie will instantly recognise, the infamous 'Yipee Kai-yay' included. Well, not in its full glory that is. Worra shame. McClane's voice isn't supplied by the real Bruce Willis.

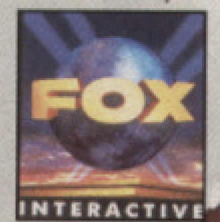
Yipee-kai-yay! You spicey melon farmer!



EXCLUSIVE DIE HARD TRILOGY COMPETITON!!

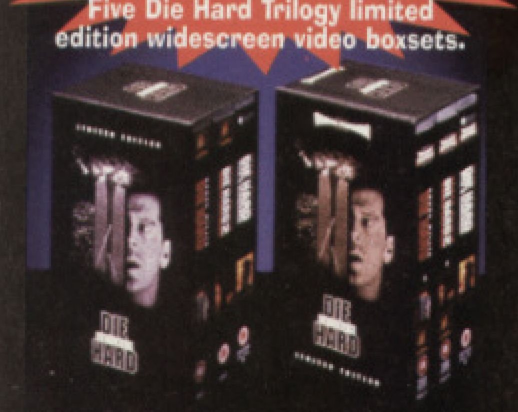
WATCH THE MOVIES! PLAY THE GAME! WEAR THE CLOBBER! BE BRUCE WILLIS!!

As it's Christmas this month, we're offering our lucky readers the chance to win some truly amazing Die Hard Trilogy prizes. In fact we've teamed-up with the lovely lads and lassies at Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment and Lee Cooper Jeans to bring you the most explosive MEAN MACHINES compo ever! Take a look at the fantastic goodies we're giving away this month:





WIN!
Five Die Hard Trilogy limited edition widescreen video boxsets.



The Die Hard Trilogy movies have grossed an estimated £20 million combined total at the UK box office! Both the widescreen (£39.99) and full-screen (£35.99) video boxsets are on sale now but are only available for a limited period. You must be over 18 years of age to win a video boxset.

WIN!
Five copies of Die Hard Trilogy on Saturn.



Fancy getting hold of a copy of this forthcoming Saturn smash before your mates do? Well now you can. With three action-packed games on one disc, Die Hard Trilogy is sure to top the sales charts this Christmas!

WIN!
Five pairs of Lee Cooper jeans plus t-shirts.



Kit yourself out as Bruce Willis with these trendy Lee Cooper jeans and white cotton t-shirts, as modelled by the gorgeous Nick here. That's funny, we thought McClane was supposed to be a rugged, macho sex-symbol? Sorry Nick!

TERRORIST DEMANDS

Okay what we want you to do is this: Twentieth Century Fox are at a bit of a loose end and need a good idea for Die Hard 4 (well, you never know!) and we want you to put your creative talent to some use. You can either draw us a movie poster, write a brief plot synopsis or send us a list of famous faces who might appear in the next sequel. Whatever. Attach your Die Hard 4 masterpiece to the coupon below and we'll print the winning entry in a future issue!

Die Hard Trilogy entry form

DEADLINE IS JANUARY 10TH, 1997!

Name:

Address:

Date of Birth (remember you must be over 18 to enter):

Tel. No:

Did you remember to attach your Die Hard 4 idea?

Fill this sucker out, put it in an envelope and send it to:DIE HARD TRILOGY COMPO, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, Emap Images Ltd, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Employees, their families and suppliers of EMAP Images Ltd, Lee Cooper and TCFHE are not eligible for entry in this competition. Oy, Alan Richmond! You're barred too! There is no cash alternative to the prizes offered. The Editor's decision is final.


Meanwhile down at the DIPPODROME...
I hope he's come on his own.
Norm's the name, sensible music's the game! Call that dancing? It looks like you're trying to wipe something off your shoe.
NORM
You should be at home getting your beauty sleep - look what it's done for me!
NORM
TWIX
TWIX
CRUNCH!
Oooooh!
CRUNCH!
Anyway you shouldn't be listening to pop and roll music. It dissolves your brain cells!
CRUNCH!
Wow! A hundred and fifty beats per minute—and that's just my heart.
TWIX
a BReak FROM The NORM

First look at Christmas NiGHTS, coming your way immediately. We look at Bullfrog's Syndicate Wars, a long-awaited project from the wee company with the big reputation. Lastly, the groove on Enemy Zero, Kenji Eno's pet I-movie project.

first look

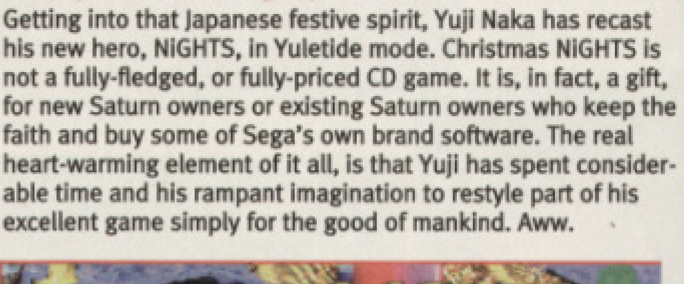


Game Name	Christmas NiGHTS
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Sonic Team
Release	Now!

CHRiSTMAS NiGHTS

In Japan Christmas is Christmas without the little baby Jesus, stripped of the Three Kings, minus the nasty Herod. It's 100%-no-religious-hangups-fun.

Getting into that Japanese festive spirit, Yuji Naka has recast his new hero, NiGHTS, in Yuletide mode. Christmas NiGHTS is not a fully-fledged, or fully-priced CD game. It is, in fact, a gift, for new Saturn owners or existing Saturn owners who keep the faith and buy some of Sega's own brand software. The real heart-warming element of it all, is that Yuji has spent considerable time and his rampant imagination to restyle part of his excellent game simply for the good of mankind. Aww.









ALL NEW

ALL NEW

Play Christmas NiGHTS for just a few minutes and you'll soon be in the festive mood. Jingle Bells, holly, presents, snow. What more could you want?

SO THIS IS CHRISTMAS

The heart of Christmas NiGHTS is a single level — the Spring Valley Zone of NiGHTS. Originally, this area was exclusive to Claris, but now both characters can play on it. Claris' version has identical layouts of rings and chips (with new graphics), but Elliot's is wacky and new, allowing incredible link potential. Both characters face a Chrissyfied version of Gillwing as boss. Your final rating is used as a guide to the amount of chances you get to play the present game.







ALL NEW

THE FIRST NOEL

Christmas NiGHTS is meant to work like an advent surprise, which means it's a shame we're giving it all away. Oh well. The game starts off as NiGHTS: Short Version. Apart from some new title music, there appears to be little new in the package. But Christmas NiGHTS is operating with your Saturn's internal clock. At a point later in November, it suddenly becomes Winter NiGHTS, and the Spring Valley Zone is covered under a layer of snow. Into December, itself, and the world is festooned with decorations for Christmas NiGHTS, and you can begin to open your presents.



FANCY GOODS

This is the nice part. After you play the dream, you get to open mystery boxes in a game of pairs. The boxes hide icons that are activated when both sets are found in sequence. The icons belong in the Christmas presents section, which offer a range of bizarre new NiGHTS features:



ALL NEW

KARAOKE

A replay of your round is shown while the original end song 'Dreams Dreams' plays, with lyrics provided Karaoke-style to sing-along!

NiGHTS MUSEUM

This takes up the bulk of the presents section, forming a huge gallery of digitised artwork. Everything in the game is represented, from art of Claris, Elliot and Nights, to backdrops, Nightmareans, Nightopians and bosses.

TIME ATTACK

A superb mini-challenge where you race around the Spring Valley Course 1 trying to collect all 29 items in the shortest time possible.

LINK ATTACK

The setting is Frozen Bell Course 1, which every NiGHTS player knows has the best link potential of any part of the game. You attempt to set a record for the most linked items.

SONIC INTO DREAMS

A lovely surprise: Yuji Naka's other creation, Sonic plays Spring Valley. The aim is the same, collect the chips and make for the exit, but Sonic cannot fly and instead plays like a supercharged version of the kids. After the level, Sonic plays the Puffy boss interlude, but with Robotnik in the role of the fat lady!

NiGHTS GOODS

A visual selection of lovely toys and promotional 'fings' which have sold loads in Japan and we won't ever get the chance to buy. Lumme·

NIGHTOPIAN COLLECTION

A mysterious screen showing the composition of your A-Life, and how happy they all are. Supposedly it will work with your original NiGHTS A-Life too.

MOVIES

There are two digitised films offered as prsents. One is a promotional vid for the Tokyo Games Show showing NiGHTS footage, the other for a promotion called 'Summer Special' which remixes NiGHTS' FMV with cheap effects like a '70s edition of TOTP.

MELODY BOX

A simple menu system allows you to remix the music from the Winter NiGHTS version. Initially we thought you'd be able to remix music from all the previous levels, which was an exciting prospect, but it seems sadly not to be the case.

XMAS FEATURE



THE BIG ONE

So you're going to get a Saturn. What's the best deal? Well, lots of stores are offering 'bundles' where your Saturn comes with a selection of games at a substantial saving on the total price of all the items if they were bought separately. We called around to match up the various deals.

STORE	PACK	PRICE	VERDICT
DIXONS	'ULTIMATE SATURN PACK' SATURN + 1 JOYPAD + ALIEN TRILOGY + SEGA RALLY + VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 + OLYMPIC SOCCER + ARCADE RACER	£319.95	Pricey, but you get a good variation in game styles and all four titles are excellent. The Arcade Racer is the one less-than-essential element. A very nice start.
DIXONS	'THREE GAME PACK' SATURN + 1 JOYPAD + SEGA RALLY + VIRTUA FIGHTER 2 + WIPEOUT	£249.95	Wipeout makes this pack stand out from the others offering Daytona USA, and the price is pretty low too.
COMET	'THREE GAME PACK' SATURN + 1 JOYPAD + DAYTONA USA + SEGA RALLY + VIRTUA FIGHTER 2	£249.95	A very reasonable deal with three top ten rankers working out at about 17 quid each.
COMET	'3 WITH NiGHTS PACK' SATURN + 1 JOYPAD + NiGHTS + ANALOGUE PAD + DAYTONA USA + VIRTUA FIGHTER	£299.95	NiGHTS with the controller, effectively a second pad, makes this very appealing, but the price is steep considering it's only the original Virtua Fighter.
HMV/VIRGIN/ TOYS 'R' US	'WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97' SATURN + 1 JOYPAD + WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97	£229.00	More of a one-off deal with Sega as these guys are not keen on the mega-bundles of the electrical retailers. But Soccer is a big enough phenomenon to make this an attractive option.
ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE	'VR PACK' SATURN + 2 JOYPADS + SEGA RALLY + VIRTUA FIGHTER 2	£249.99	No nonsense games and an extra Joypad which is pretty much essential and worth 20 quid. VF 2 and Sega Rally are the cream on the cake.

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

We've all been in the situation of having a new machine and only one or two games to play on it over Christmas. Gus remembers getting a Commodore 64 and a lone copy of Bruce Lee from US Gold. Hours of fun there — yeah, literally hours. But if you want days, even weeks of enjoyment from a limited library, take our tips.

CHRISTMAS DAY

If your family all piles round for Christmas Day and your Saturn is the focus of attention, you want something that everyone can participate in, preferably multi-player and will also sustain your interest. Something colourful, immediate, fun and festive. Suggestions:

WORLDWIDE SOCCER '97 / SEGA RALLY / DAYTONA CCE / VIRTUA COP 2 / FIGHTING VIPERS / VIRTUAL ON / ATHLETE KINGS

BOXING DAY

Home Alone. Dad's gone to bed with turkey-induced indigestion, mum's legless on cooking sherry. Now you want something absorbing and contemplative as an alternative to the You've Been Framed Xmas special. In our considered opinion:

TOMB RAIDER / EXHUMED / COMMAND AND CONQUER / BLAM! MACHINEHEAD / ACTUA GOLF

TWELFTH NIGHT

You're a gamesplayer who wants a substantial challenge that's going to see you into the New Year. All these games are epics or open-ended tests of skill:

NiGHTS / STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2 / MAGIC CARPET THUNDERHAWK 2 / ULTIMATE MK3

CHRISTMAS CASH

The rellies have stumped up the readies — well Auntie can't be arsed finding you embarrassing matching monogrammed Y-front and handkerchief sets any more. Fortuitously, some of the best new games are not due out until the New Year. So hang on for one of these sure-fire hits:

DIE HARD TRILOGY (JAN/FEB) / FIFA '97 (JAN) / DARK SAVIOUR (JAN) / TEMPEST 2000 (JAN) / BUG TOO! (JAN/FEB)



Game Name	Syndicate Wars
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	Bullfrog
Release	March '97

The general consensus is that the future will be like Blade Runner. Dark, neon-lit rain-washed cities will play host to vicious running battles between robotic figures and floating white-robed fanatics. Bullfrog are doing nothing to dispel this image with their new ultra-violent strategy game, Syndicate wars. We sent Steve, our newest Cybernetic Agent, to infiltrate Bullfrog's hi-tech HQ and assimilate all available data. Uplink established, prepare to download...

Bullfrog have already made their presence felt on the Saturn with the release of Magic Carpet and Theme Park to critical acclaim. Now they are planning their next assault with what is possibly their most complex game yet, a sequel to the 1993 PC classic, Syndicate. The original game cast you as a Eurocorp executive responsible for controlling four cybernetically enhanced agents in progressively deadlier missions against rival corporations. While the game sold by the truckload, there were certain criticisms. Due to the isometric viewpoint, it was possible to lose sight of your agents behind buildings, and the AI on the enemy agents wasn't too hot. Now these problems have been resolved with a spiffy new 3D viewpoint and enough weapons to start a small civil war. Which is, fortunately enough, the premise of the game.



SYNDICATE WARS

I have a big gun and if you hassle me I'll batter you before you can cry "police brutality!"



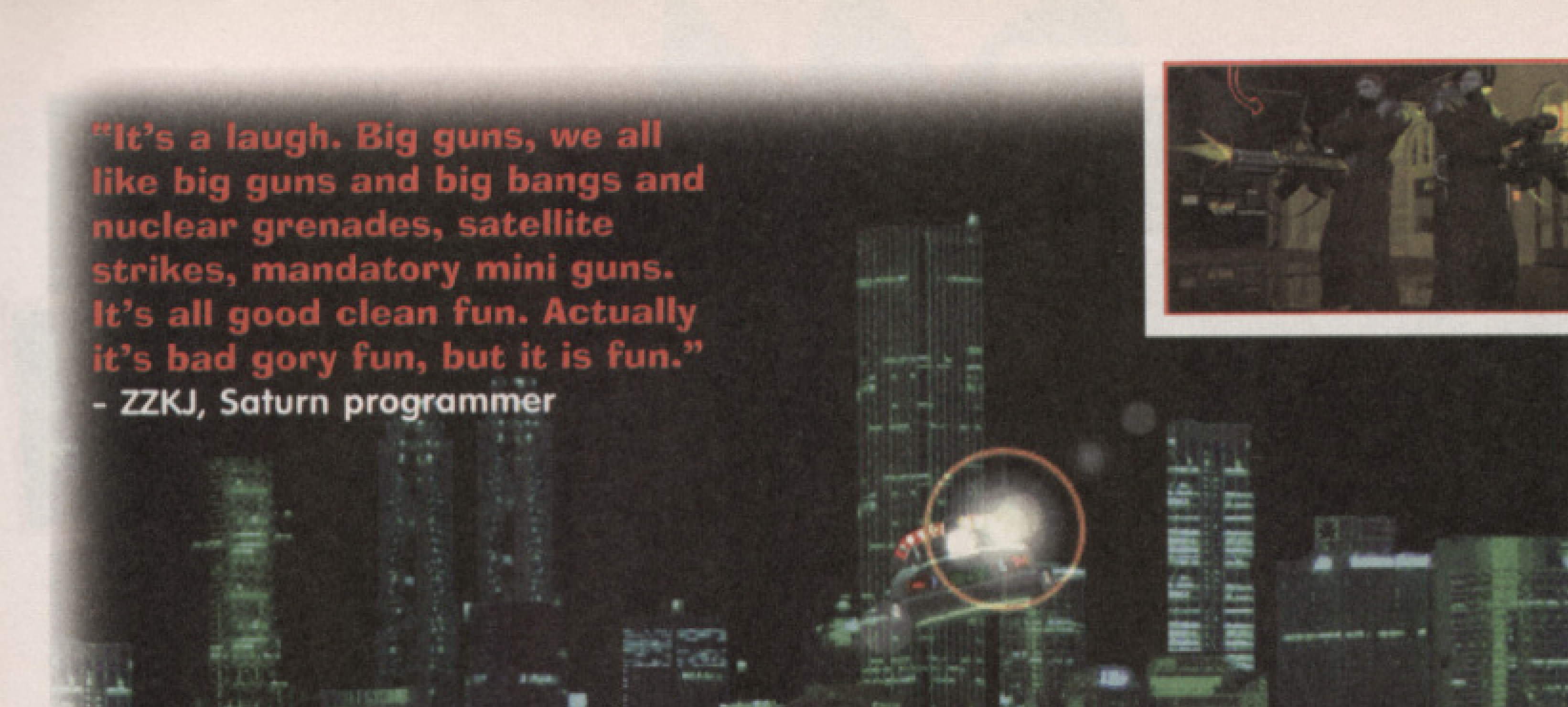


WANNA BE IN MY GANG?

At the start of Syndicate Wars, you have to decide which side to align yourself with. Will you take control of a quartet of Eurocorp's enhanced cyborg agents, or choose to guide four heavily armed Church zealots through the game? We asked original team leader Mike Diskett who's hardest, cyborgs or fanatics? "I'm inclined to say the Syndicate because they're not wearing frocks. It's easier to play as Syndicate than Church if you're playing right through the game. The Church have more advanced technology so statistically they're harder, but they wear frocks, so they can't be."

FIERCELY THICKENING PLOT

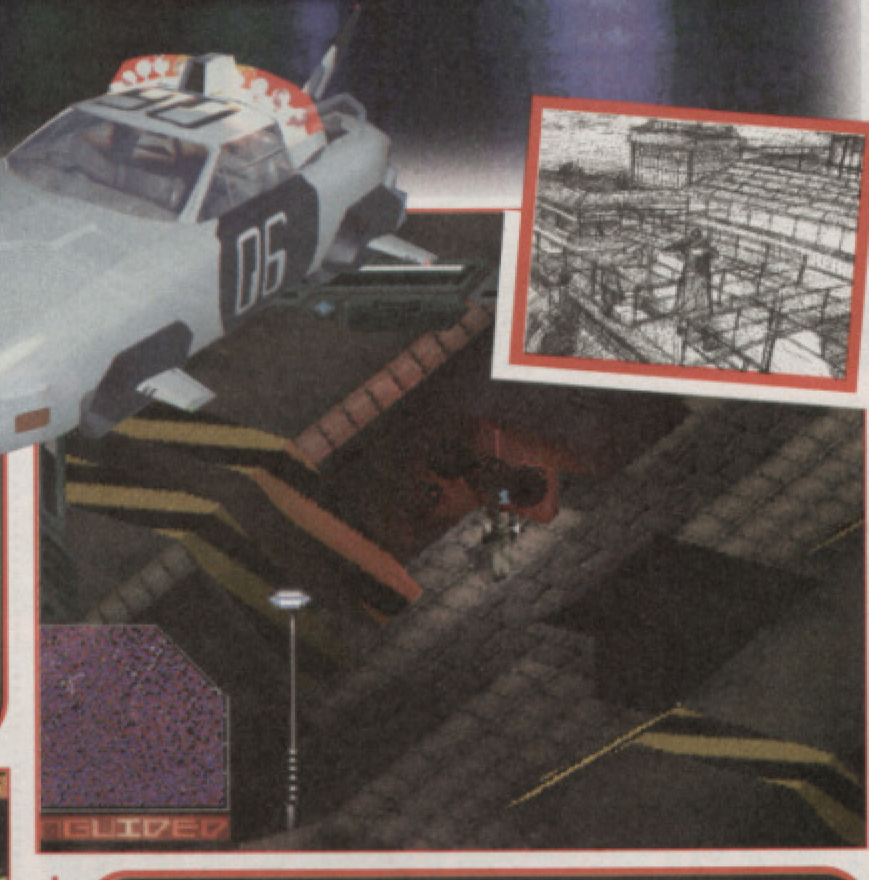
Syndicate Wars is set fifty years after the first game, and Eurocorp now has a stranglehold on the world. Using advanced persuasion techniques, they can control the populace for their own nefarious ends. But some people have managed to block the chips' effects and can see the world for what it really is. Forming a religious cult, called the Church of the New Epoch, their God-given mission is to liberate the world from the clutches of Eurocorp. Of course Eurocorp aren't taking too kindly to this, so they've defrosted their top cybernetic agents from cryo-storage and are preparing to take the corporate battle back to the streets.



"It's a laugh. Big guns, we all like big guns and big bangs and nuclear grenades, satellite strikes, mandatory mini guns. It's all good clean fun. Actually it's bad gory fun, but it is fun."
- ZZKJ, Saturn programmer

ENGINES OF DOOM

So what are the other advances over the first game? "We've got the world in 3D now," continues Mike, "and the principle reason for this is that in the first game, one of the biggest complaints was it was an isometric view and if you walked behind a building that was it, you couldn't see yourself. So now you can walk behind buildings and simply rotate the map so you can always keep yourself in view. We had to wait for a while for the technology to catch up so we could actually do that." Bullfrog have also added dynamic lighting effects, so you can shoot out all the streetlights and plunge the city into darkness. There is now the potential for spectacular chain reactions too. Park a car next to a building and blow it up, and the shockwave from the explosion could feasibly level the building as well. Then there are futuristic travel tubes which you can use to get from one side of the city to the other, and if there's just one explosion somewhere along it, the whole travel system explodes and crumbles to the floor piece by piece.







TACTICAL STRIKES

Thanks to the extra processing power available to the Saturn, the AI of the enemy agents is much improved over the first game. According to Mike, "The enemies now actually have tactics built in. If a whole load of agents were attacking you in the first one, they didn't know they were part of a group, they just individually attacked you. But now they're aware of each other and they'll try and form a plan together so often some of them will go one way round a building and some will go the other so that they flank you and take you by surprise." Enemies can also be seen adopting sneaky tactics used by human players in the original Syndicate, like hiding round a corner and flaming your agents one by one. Fortunately though, corners no longer present a hazard.

DEMOLITION DERBY

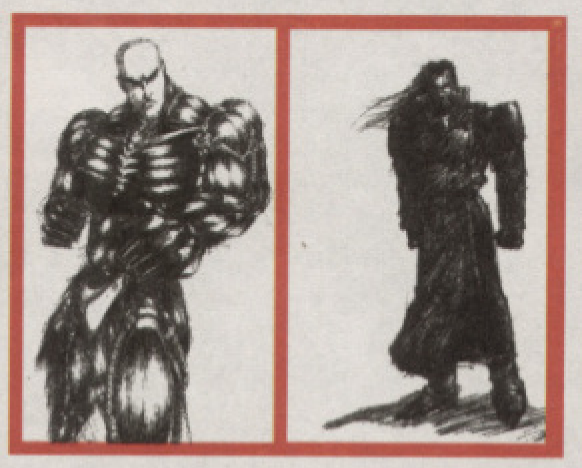
"One of the best things about Syndicate Wars", says Saturn converter ZZKJ, "is that whole cities can be destroyed. I like the fact that you can destroy anything, like the whole world can be blown up. There's a huge building, fine, there was a huge building, now it's a big pile of rubble." This is certainly the case. New weapons like nuclear grenades and satellite laser strikes fill the whole screen with flames and explosions, you can blast huge craters in the ground and collapsing buildings fall in on themselves like a card house in a gust of wind. "That can be a problem in missions where you have to capture someone." adds ZZKJ, "Demolish a building and you're likely to flatten the hostage as well."



PHASED PLASMA RIFLE

Syndicate Wars' cityscapes are very much in the Blade Runner vein, but what else inspired the development team? Mike Diskett again, "I was probably more inspired by the kind of Terminator idea which is that these agents are almost invincible, so civilians are meaningless to them. They don't care whether civilians live or die. Also the Terminator films are completely filled with violent weaponry and gunfights and we want you to be in a fire fight and feel that sort of tense situation. Obviously having four invincible Terminators wouldn't make for great gameplay so you're kind of equally matched in that you're going up against other cyborgs. Other members of the team were influenced by different things, like one of out artists is into Manga and so was influenced by all sorts of Japanese artwork. Towards the later levels there are a few Mechs in there. There's one that's like a giant crab and there's another one which is like a Gundam robot, he sort of hovers round the map, he's got lots of hover jets that allow him to move round."

"The fundamental enjoyment behind the game is that you have a system that is all set up and working nicely, where people have jobs to do, and then you get to go in there and it's like poking an anthill with a stick." - Mike Diskett, team leader





Eurocorp agents "eat electric death" courtesy of those pesky Church of the New Epoch zealots.

URBAN SPLENDOUR

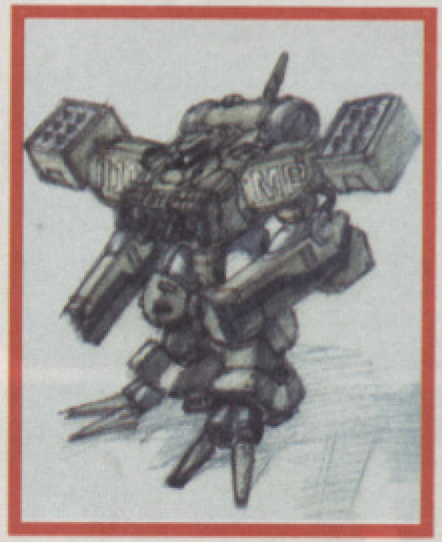
One of the other problems with the first game was that a lot of the scenery looked the same. Have you done anything about that? "The reason the first game looked a bit samey was because the cities were built out of a block set, there were only 256 different graphical blocks available. So there'd be three types of roof blocks, three window blocks and there was only a certain amount of variety we could build in. But in Syndicate Wars, the maps are polygon based, so each one can be completely different, there don't have to be any shared buildings at all. In actual fact we do have certain buildings because we want people to be familiar with types of building, they always need to be able to recognise a police station, a bank and so on. So we have a huge variety of buildings, then we've got the landscapes which can be completely different on each level, because you've got height fields, so you can have mountains or valleys. We've got rivers too, there are some levels that actually have boats on as well."

SHOEHORNS AT THE READY

So how did programmer ZZKJ go about cramming an 8 meg PC game onto the 2 meg Saturn? " The Saturn is a general purpose games machine, while the PlayStation is a true 3D games machine. This is a 3D game, so the first thing we had to do was to figure out what can be done in the 2D part of the Saturn. That then tells me what I need to fit in the available space, then we figure out what can actually fit in the available space and then the initial stages of the Saturn conversion is to basically get the engine up and running. This was difficult because the Saturn's only got 2 megs of RAM and whereas Steve (the PSX converter) has an 8 meg development system, I don't. So he was able to get the code up and running quickly, while I've had to pull bits out. It can be done but the Saturn is pushed a bit, which is why I took the project on - I don't believe in doing easy projects."







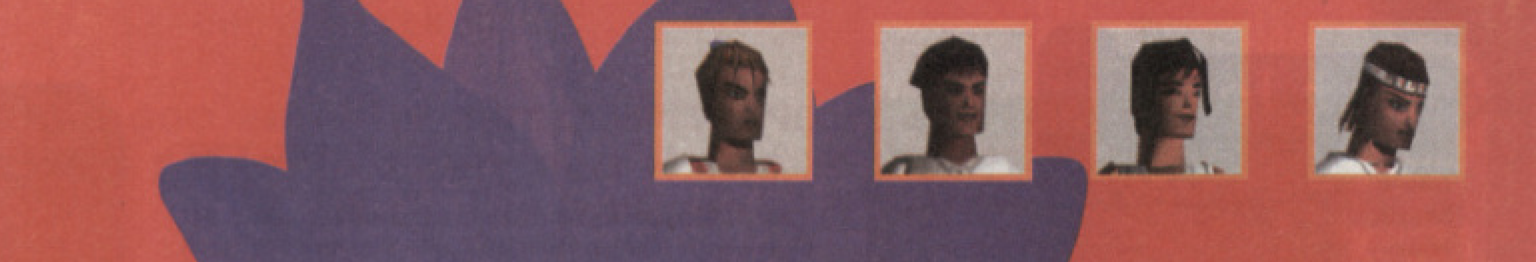


FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

Bullfrog are keen to include multi-player modes in the Saturn conversion. There is the option of having two or four people playing co-operatively on one machine, so each player controls one or two agents. This is because Syndicate Wars was designed with the 32-bit consoles in mind. The PC original also allowed for eight player deathmatch games over a network, but for the Saturn this has had to be cut down to two players over a serial link. "It's quite different playing the network game," enthuses Mike, "it becomes a mixture of Quake and Command and Conquer, because you end up with the Quake aspect of just going out there to kill as many people as possible, but you also build bases up. This isn't something we've designed in, this is just how we ended up playing it. You create safe havens by laying razor wire traps around an area, and you've got laser bases you can put down which are like little gun turrets that shoot your enemies. So it turns into a game of protecting your base and attacking other people." However, whilst Bullfrog are enthusing about the serial link game, Sega are switching their attention to the Netlink add-on so the developers are currently waiting patiently for their instruction manuals. "It shouldn't take much to support," says ZZKJ, "because once you've got it handling a normal head to head link up, it's not that difficult to do. It would obviously need a cartridge though."

LONG TIME COMING

The PC version of Syndicate Wars took over two years to make. Surely the Saturn game hasn't been in development that long? "I've been working on it since May," recalls ZZKJ. "I learnt the Saturn in April, started work in May, had the engine up and running by the end of May and we've been working on it since. The main problem we've been having is that the PC version was only finished recently. If I'm working from code that has been finalised I can change it, do what I want with it. Whereas if the code hasn't been finished it basically it takes two to five times longer to convert and that is what's delayed us. There was a lot of work that simply couldn't get done until last month, because the PC version didn't get finalised until last month. Now we can actually get cracking on it and if everything goes according to plan we'll be finished by mid-Spring next year."

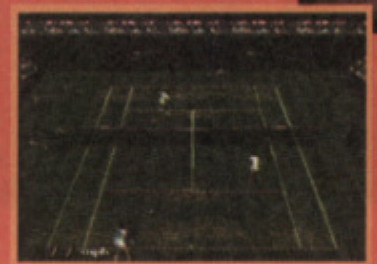




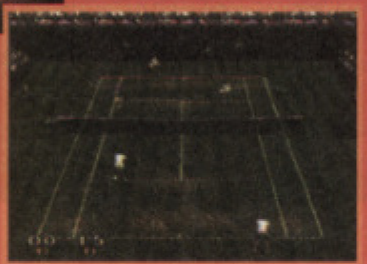
PEACE?
YES
UNDERSTANDING
SURE
LOVE?
NOT ON THIS COURT

BREAK POINT WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE.















ocean
http://ocean.co.uk

first look

Game Name	Enemy Zero
Publisher	Acclaim
Developer	Warp
Release	December (Japan)

The Interactive movie still has one champion. Kenji Eno has spent two years bringing his space horror flick, EØ, to Saturn.

Few games have registered this much interest in the Japanese game press in 1996. It's all the more incredible when you consider that Warp, the small programming team behind it, were virtually unknown a year ago. Their rapid rise to celebrity status was on the back of the adventure game 'D'. 'D' was able to buck the trend of crap FMV adventures by virtue of being genuinely atmospheric, and having an enigmatic and attractive female lead, Laura. After D, Warp has been working on EØ. Laura has been transported onto a space ship troubled by a voracious and elusive enemy form. UK release is March '97

ENEMY ZERO

WHAT BECAME OF THE AK-1?

Laura is stirred from hypersleep on the AK-1, a long-range spacecraft formed of four towers named after the seasons. The reason for the disturbance is unknown, but it soon becomes clear that something awful is happening. Laura's apartment is in the Winter Tower, and she must try to make contact with the six other crew members via the internal communications system. On the later stages she meets and interacts with them. (Marcus is yet to be listed here).

THE SURVIVORS

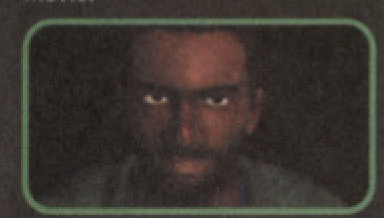
LAURA
The heroine of the game. The player character.



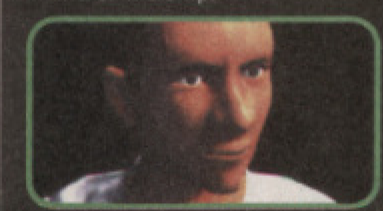
KIMBERLY
Parker's lover. When Laura awakes, she meets her as one of the surviving members. After a while, they set out together.



PARKER
He can be seen in the opening movie.



DAVID
David. He may look young but he's in fact the second in command of the ship.





The Long Walk

The poorest aspect of D was the inability to have any kind of free movement. EØ, by contrast, offers you direct control of Laura as she moves around the corridors and levels of the space craft. The quality and speed of the realtime 3D is excellent, and there is genuine realtime gameplay, with Laura able to find a gun with which to defend herself.



Sole Searching

Laura begins alone in her cabin, requiring you to locate the passes needed to open her locker and access the ship's security systems. Playing this puzzle part of the game is similar to D. You see the rendered scenes from Laura's perspective and have a limited ability to move around and search objects. A simple menu system brings up her possessions for you to try.







RONNY
The man in charge of the spaceship AK-1 is Captain Ronny.

GEORGE
This is George. His details are still a secret but he seems set to be a computer genius.

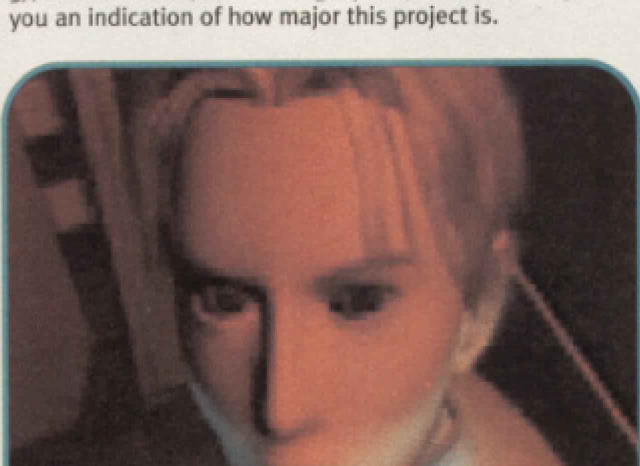


Sinister Sounds

The continuous background music for EØ is, frankly, scary. Never less than brooding, it becomes outright spooky when Laura enters a dangerous area. It's the work of respected Brit composer Michael Nyman, who has produced Oscar-winning scores for movies like The Piano. The effects also seem to send a shiver up your spine, even if it's only the 'pinging' of Laura's locker. Recently completed, the music CD is now on sale in Japan.

Top People

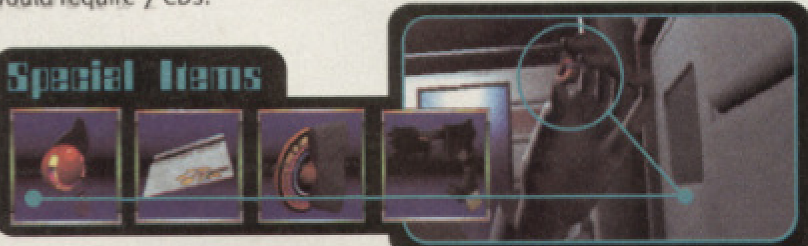
Warp have enlisted some big name voice actors for the parts of the crew members. As most Western films/television is dubbed, the status of the voice actor is much higher than in Britain. EØ's Japanese cast includes Komazaka Yui (T2, Die Hard series), Koda Nahoka (Ripley in Jap Alien 3), Ohzuka Akio (Steven Seagal parts). This should give you an indication of how major this project is.





This is a demo

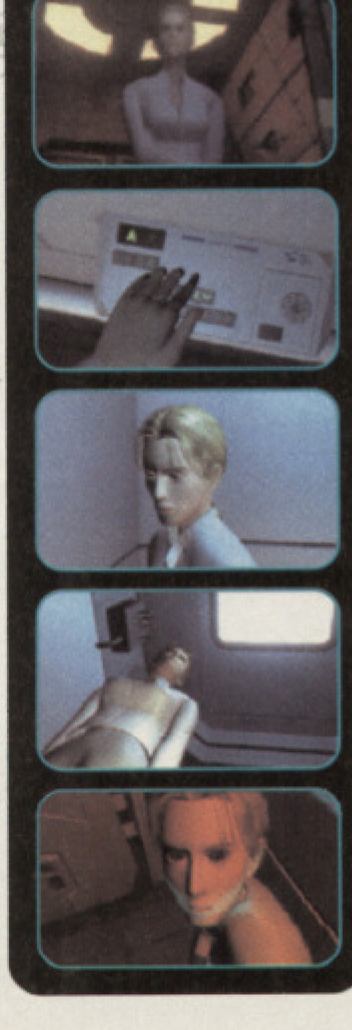
All the pics here were grabbed by us from a PlayStation demo of the game, the version shown earlier this year at the PlayStation Expo. We did this because we're sure the Saturn version will look the same — because the game is, by and large, rendered footage. Despite the source, only the Saturn version has a firm release date, and Warp have stated they will not produce a PSX version (for various reasons). The game comes on four discs! This may seem ridiculous, but it's actually using massive JPEG compression for video. The producer claims a PlayStation version would require 7 CDs!











SPEAKING TO SCRIPT WRITER SAKAMOTO YUJI

Sakamoto Yuji is famous for scripting the Japanese TV drama series 'Tsubasa o kudasai' (Can I have a sparrow please?). He has also directed a movie called 'Yuri'. He's responsible for all the script and the unique system of dialogue in Enemy Zero, and their next project, code-named 'Real Sound'. He started in games just this year and has already got himself a Megadrive and 90 games. He is a fan of both Warp and games.

YS:
I started playing games just this year. I started playing games because of D and my interest in Warp grew. As time went on, Warp asked me to be involved in Warp's next project, EØ, and in a way I wish I had not got involved (he's joking). Now all the fun of finding out the plot is gone because I wrote the whole thing!!

INTERVIEWER:
What is your exact role at Warp?

YS:
I was handed a synopsis of the game's story and was told what each character should say at each point in the game. Then I would go on to make the script and add atmosphere to the dialogue in the game.

INTERVIEWER:
What's the difference between writing for TV dramas and games?

YS:
It's not that much different. In films and TV, I always talk extensively about the project with the directors/producers and then I go on to produce the script. That's exactly what I did for the game so there's not that much difference.

INTERVIEWER:
As games are full of interaction, unlike films and TV, were you given any pointers about what to avoid?

YS:
I had to think a lot about how the characters spoke. I had to make sure the characters spoke like a person in a game and not to look out of place. The story was there already so I just edited and changed the dialogue a little. But right now I am concentrating on writing the script for Real Sound (Warp's new game) and that's giving me a bit of a headache.

INTERVIEWER:
Is there anything else that you concentrated on?

YS:
I tried to not distort or destroy the world of Enemy Zero created by Warp's director, Mr Lino. I didn't want to reveal the characters too much so that the games player can imagine more. So I didn't reveal the characters' details too much, just the odd hints here and there. Making the characters as full as possible was a hard task. I wanted them to be as human-like as possible by having human traits and trends like having girlfriends back on Earth and so on.

INTERVIEWER:
Was writing the script fun?

YS:
Yes. It was hugely different from all the dramas that I do for TV. It's a fresh subject as it's never been done in any drama series. It's very different from D in that the story in EØ is very important. In D, the story wasn't the most important aspect of the game and relied heavily on the theme of vampires but the story in D is unique yet it's universal as anybody can relate to it. Take away the background settings of EØ and you can apply it to the present day.

INTERVIEWER:
Are you going to continue in the games industry?

YS:
I would like to and there are games that I would like to make, even create the games myself. Perhaps I'll write a whole truck load of scripts andtake it Mr Lino's house!! Ha, ha, ha!

This interview has been translated from the original Japanese in Saturn Fan magazine.


review
Game Name
Virtua Cop 2
Publisher
Sega
Release
December
Price
£49.99
Game Style
Shoot-'em-up
Import?
Linkplay?
Players
1-2
Control
Joypad/Virtua Gun
Background
Conversion of AM2's stunning coin-op cop sequel
POLICE
VIRTUA
COP 2
DETECTIVE
SPECIAL POLICE
2

Call 911! The foul EVL Corporation is running riot in Virtua City once again and the boys in blue have requested backup. Have you got what it takes to clean up the scum filled streets or are you gonna be going home in a body bag?

As a matter of history, light gun games have a bit of a reputation for being repetitive, predictable affairs with shallow gameplay and very little replay value. The likes of Operation Wolf and T2: The Arcade Game stand out as two cool games that offered a true two-player challenge but on the whole these coin-op cabinets were usually relegated to the back of the arcade and treated with scorn by hardened gamers. However, two years ago, Sega redefined this much-neglected genre and produced a polygon powered, police-themed, pulse-pounding, pistol-packing title that showed there was still life in the old dog yet. Thus the first Virtua Cop game was something of a major hit both in the arcades and on Saturn. Taking their winning first person shoot-'em-up formula to the next level, coin-op gods AM2 then produced a superlative sequel, the imaginatively-titled Virtua Cop 2. Now, after months of development, tantalising preview screenshots and the prospect of dusting down our Virtua Guns for the first time in ages, MEAN MACHINES SEGA finally targets the awesome Virtua Cop 2. Do ya feel lucky punk?



SEARCH AND DESTROY

Virtua Cop 2's gameplay remains as user-friendly as ever with both joypad users and Virtua Gun owners being catered for. Of course the ideal way to play the game is with the gun (or two guns if you're a pistol-packin' mutha!) but even the joypad response is excellent with an on-screen cursor providing pinpoint accuracy. Holding down the B button speeds the cursor around even faster and also reloads your weapon when tapped twice. However, the Virtua Gun is still an essential piece of hardware, improving reaction times and performance potential and that familiar 'off-screen' flicked-wrist reloading action is still as satisfying as ever. When tackling EVL henchman it's important to keep an eye on your gun's targeter. This circular sight zooms in on designated enemy targets and quickly changes colour indicating that your foe is about to fire. If the circle flashes red and a bullet hole appears on the screen, you've been shot pal. It's also vital to avoid hitting any innocent bystanders whatsoever as this will cost you a life and lose any special weapons. Unfortunately, the citizens of Virtua City are a bit dense, to say the least, and have a tendency to wander into the crossfire with little regard for their own personal safety. Everybody hit the deck!



FILE 1: BIG CHASE!

The first stage kicks off with a daring jewellery store heist and also introduces Janet Marshall. She acts as your driver for the high-speed pursuit sections. You'll have a riot shooting car tyres, blasting grenade-throwing thugs, getting involved in a major pile-up and just generally causing havoc in the city streets.

FILE 2: SAVE THE MAYOR!

Those EVL morons are up to more shifty shenanigans as they attempt to kidnap the Mayor and hold him for ransom. Set in and around the Virtua Harbour, stage two takes place within a multi-level terminal building and cruise liner. There are vile villains lurking all over every inch of this level and you'll need to keep your wits about you as masked faces are crawling all over the place!

FILE 3: RAIL LINE SHOOTOUT!

The final challenge initially takes place aboard a speeding train with players pursuing suspects through each carriage and even up onto the roof. The action then hots up to super nova proportions as you reach the EVL headquarters and face the mechanised might of the massive Cat-Tank. We don't want to spoil the final surprise ending just yet but we advise you to take the Saturn Way for an extra special treat...

IT'S A BLAST!

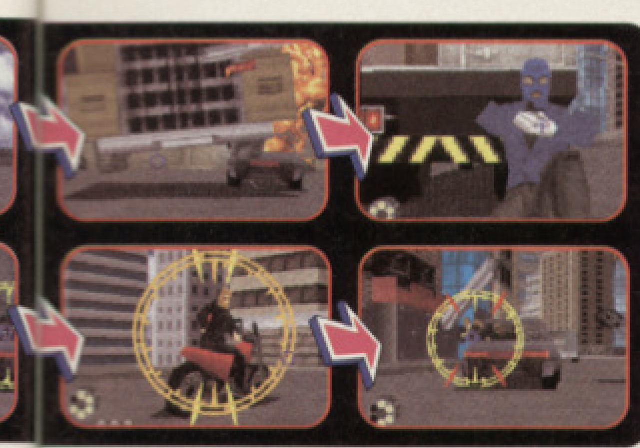
The Adjust Mode enables players to manually correct their gun's aim. Use the target to calibrate the Virtua Gun. Aim for the bullseye, squeeze the trigger, check your results and then press Start to begin. Once set-up correctly there should be no excuse for poor marksmanship!

JUSTICE IS SERVED

You'll no doubt be grinning from ear to ear with the thought of yet another fast-paced shoot-'em-up but blasting away at the screen regardless isn't the way to play this game. Seasoned Virtua veterans will see Cop 2 as the ideal place to hone their skills and master the 'Justice Shot', a procedure vital for racking up massive scores. As with the original game, players can disarm gun-toting criminals with a well-aimed shot to the hand. The more points you score, the more hidden secrets and modes may be accessed...

COP SHOW

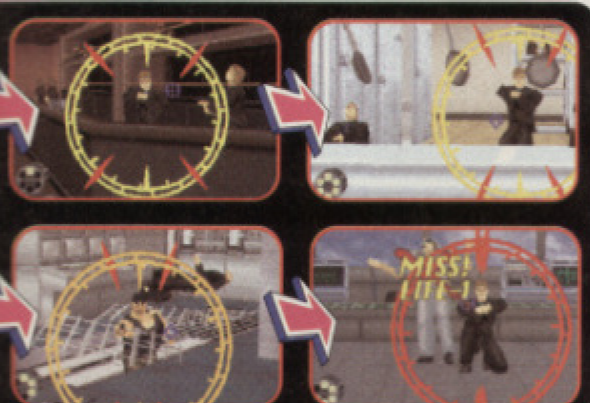
The great thing about home conversions is that developers often add extra bells and whistles to a title to separate it from its arcade cousin. Sega has always been hot when it comes to presentation and Virtua Cop 2 is no exception. The Saturn game now features a really cool rendered intro sequence that sets the scene for the action and excitement that lies ahead. After seeing this amazing intro footage, fellow Cop 2 fan and C&VG Dep Ed Tom Guise reckons that Sega has actually stolen his idea for a weekly Virtua Cop TV show! Hmm... we reckon Sega's legal department just might have something to say about that.



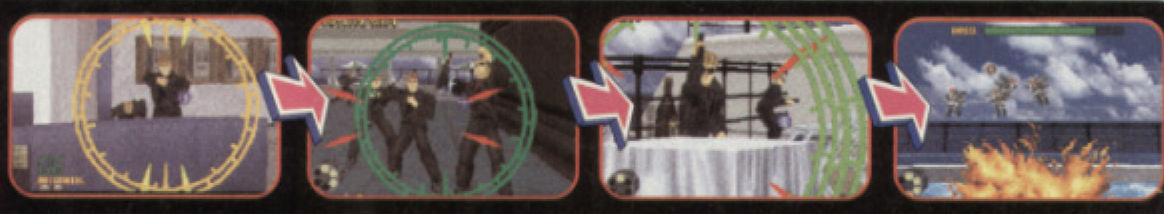
ROUTE 1: DOWNTOWN



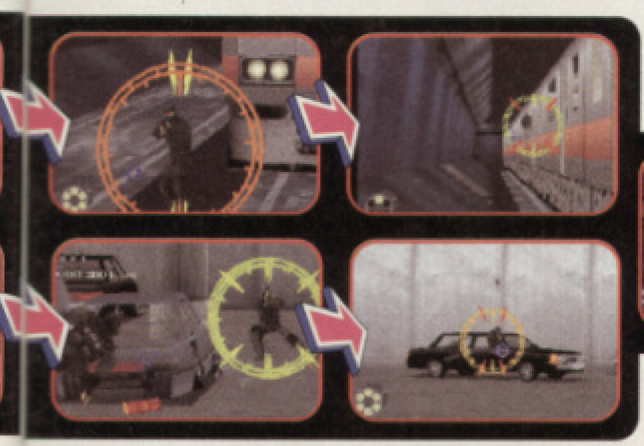
ROUTE 2: SEASIDE DRIVE



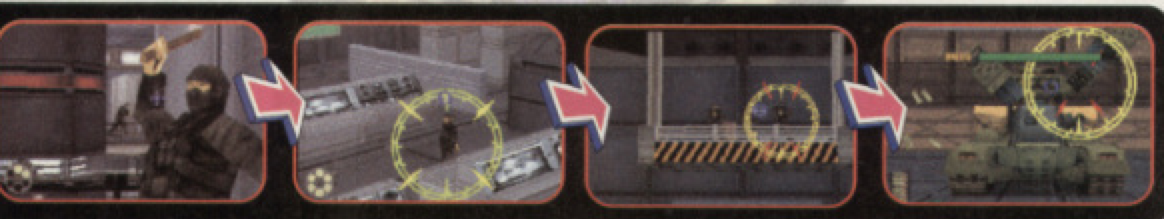
ROUTE 1: ONE DECK



ROUTE 2: BRIDGE



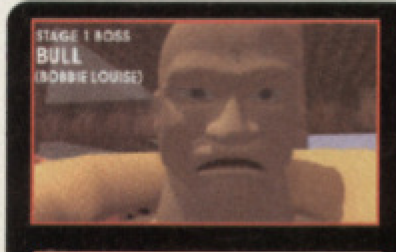
ROUTE 1: ARCADE LINE



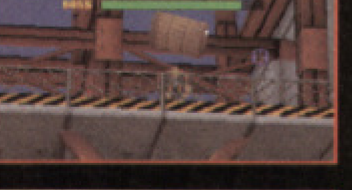
ROUTE 2: SATURN WAY

It's well worth shelling out £24.99 for a Virtua Gun.

CRIMINAL MASTERMINDS



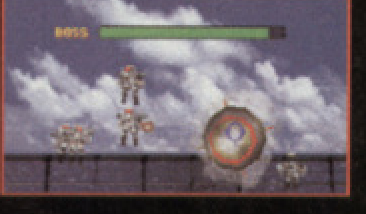




BULL

This meat-head mobster is a real powerhouse and proves to be the first major villain in Virtua Cop 2. His attack patterns are completely predictable as he stands above you throwing explosive barrels, massive crates and launching rockets at an alarming rate. Be prepared for his last ditch attack as he chucks a flippin' Virtua Coffee van at your noggin!





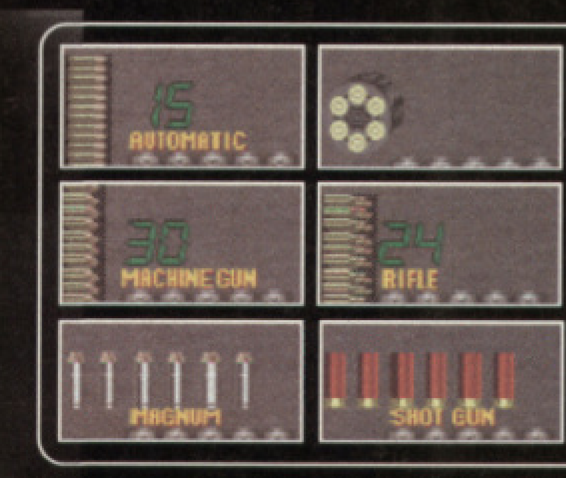
AIR DIVERS

The final challenge of Stage 2 arrives in the form of these jet-packed nutters who have enough firepower to waste even the toughest cops. They hover above the cruise liner taking turns at using you for target practice but there are so many of them it's easy to score multiple hits without really trying.



CAT-TANK – PILOT: GARSE BLADLEY

This guy is seriously tanked-up which is not surprising really when you consider the fact that's he's driving a twenty ton armoured assault vehicle! As with his boss brothers, Garse has a tendency to use rocket-based attacks but also rams the screen from time to time. Once his craft is disabled, Garse himself decides to take you on!



GUNS 'N' AMMO

Players begin each stage with a fairly ineffective six shot pistol but there are various extra weapons to be found often hidden in crates and other less obvious places. These include the Assault Rifle, Machine Gun, Automatic , Shotgun and Dirty Harry's best mate, the Magnum. The rapid fire capabilities of the Machine Gun are excellent for taking out groups of EVL agents whilst both the Shotgun and Magnum make short work of even the toughest boss.

AUTHORISED PERSONNEL ONLY

Completing Virtua Cop 2 isn't actually that tough, even when set on Hard level, but once finished a range of further options becomes available. We've yet to discover a Mirror Mode or additional game sections but the extras we have found are still mighty impressive. These include the opportunity to remove the on-screen joypad target sight, switch your gun to Auto Reload, select any of the available weapons to play with (just pause the game at any time and press C to select a different gun) and our two favourite secrets: The Virtua Cop 1 Mode and Ranking Mode!



VIRTUA COP 1 MODE

This handy mode enables players to tackle any of the three stages but this time, when you hit an EVL thug, a Virtua Cop flash appears on screen in the same graphical style as the first game. The targeter circle is also from Cop 1 as is the score multiplier system.



RANKING MODE

For racking up massive points, the Ranking Mode is the option to plump for. Players begin each level with a score multiplier bar located in the top left-hand corner of the screen. As targets are hit, this bar begins to fill up unless you get shot then it returns to zero. Complete a level with a full bar and your score can be doubled, tripled or even multiplied by nine! Also, if you hit a thug three times you'll receive a three shot bonus.

WHAT THE HEY?

There are loads of clever little graphical and gameplay touches contained within Virtua Cop 2 and AM2 have also included sly references to other Sega games. For a start, in the rendered intro sequence, when Michael is speeding to the crime scene, who should he pass in the street but Lion Rafale from Virtua Fighter 2! There's also a poster and massive billboard depicting VF2's Sarah as well as a few other visual treats to spot. The level of player interaction in Virtua Cop 2 has also been increased and you can now shoot virtually everything on-screen from plant pots and chandeliers to watermelon slices and telephones. Finally, keep your eyes peeled for the Virtua Coffee advertising plastered all over the place. Mmm... you can almost smell those roast polygon granules.

scores

GRAPHICS reach polygon perfection with glitch-free visuals and fast-paced action. The motion-captured bad guys look superb as do the many varied stage settings.

94

SOUND Excellent arranged tunes that not only manage to accurately heighten the atmosphere and on-screen action but also actually sound better than the original coin op's music.

92

PLAYABILITY Hey, it's AM2, what do you think? Perfectly balanced gameplay with progressively tougher levels, loads of hidden stuff and an amazing two-player co-operative experience.

95

LASTABILITY Even if you complete Virtua Cop 2 in one sitting, the chance to increase your score and ranking status will prove to be irresistible. Plenty of secrets to uncover and multiple routes to tackle.

95

overall

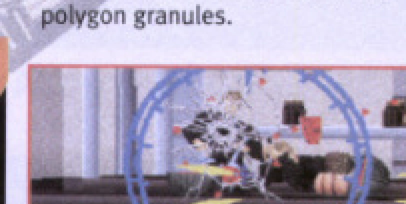
An explosive sequel and an essential purchase. Even if you already own Virtua Cop there's just so much more to this game.

94

comment

MATT

Fantastic! Just when I thought my Virtua Gun would never see the light of day again, Sega unveils the shoot-em-up event of the year. As we expected, Virtua Cop 2 is everything AM2 promised plus a whole lot more besides. From the smooth intro sequence and glitch-free polygon visuals to the adrenalin pumping gameplay and stunning music, this is one Saturn title that simply oozes class. Of course the addition of extra features and tons of cool hidden stuff improves a near perfect title but the games most obvious enjoyable feature has to be the two player mode. Grab a mate and an extra light gun and you're rocking! Even if you finish the game itself there are still challenges to be undertaken ranging from obtaining better scores and improving your overall ranking to discovering neat secrets and extra play modes. The only minor gripe I have is that the PAL version has slight borders but there's very little effect on the overall game speed. There's certainly no doubt about it, with Virtua Cop 2 strengthening Sega's line-up, Christmas '97 is going to be a Saturn owners idea of heaven!



comment

GUS

I remember being amazed with Virtua Cop last year, it really changed our perception of the Saturn. But it looks so primitive next to Virtua Cop 2, which is AM2's latest wonder. Everything about this sequel is bigger: levels are twice the size and have double the amount of enemies, and the game seems to play twice as fast. The settings are much more detailed and interesting, and there are some crazy tour-de-forces, the car chase on level one being just a taster to a restaurant-wreckin' episode on a cruise liner and a train-top duel with a kamikaze helicopter. Once again, VC2 highlights just what a marvellous piece of work the Virtua Gun is, as you have complete faith in the aiming and response on-screen. VC2 is a completely different beast from the first game in all but one respect: Saturn owners must have it.







Lock and load, pal! It's time to clean up the streets!

review

Game Name	Virtual On		
Publisher	Sega		
Release	December	Price	£49.99
Game Style	Shoot-'em-up		
Import? ✗	Linkplay? ✓	Players	1-2
Control	Joypad/Twin Stick		
Background	AM3's unique robot-battling coin-op arrives on Saturn.		

Sega has always been very concise with the names of its coin-ops. Virtua Racing, Sega Rally, Virtua Fighter, no comprehension problems there. But Virtual On? Wassat then?

It's not exactly an obvious name for a game, but then Virtual On isn't exactly an obvious idea for a game either. Still, it's been by far the most popular game in Japanese arcades this year and that's no mean trick. Two of those natty 'mobile suit' robots that the Japanese are mad keen on battle it out in a full 3D arena. Buildings are available to hide behind and each of the eight Virtuaroids has its own unique weaponry to blow the crap out of their opponents. The victor then goes on to fight the biggest baddest battle bot of them all, Z-Gradt. So it's a bit like Virtua Fighter but with robots then? Not at all my friends.



MEAN 16

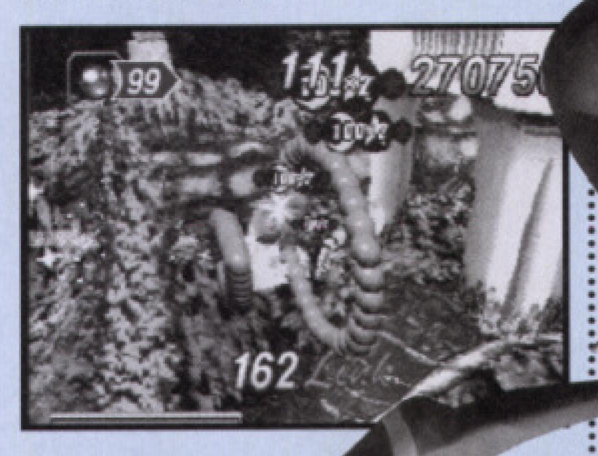
Watcha, Phil here. I've recently jumped from the good ship C&VG to join the ranks of the naughty, but nice, MEAN MACHINES crew. I'll be taking over the tips pages from now on. The best tip sent to me each month will win a brand new Sega game, this could range from the awesome Fighting Vipers to Daytona CCE or even Virtua Cop 2. If you feel that you have a really hot tip that we haven't seen before, send it in and you may win one of these cool titles. Scribble your tips, cheats and hints on a piece of paper and sent it to: IS THIS TIP WORTH A GAME?, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

SATURN TIPS

NiGHTS

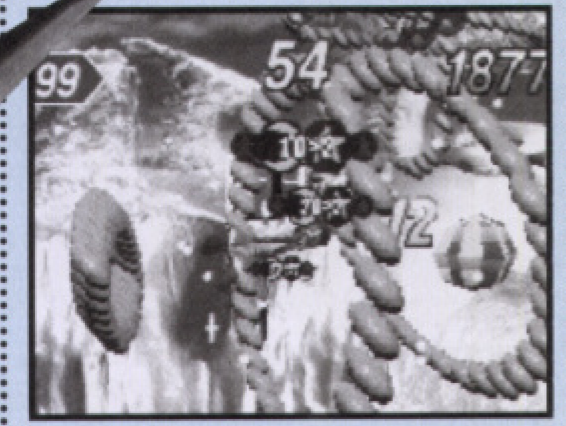
DEBUG SCREEN

This cool cheat only works on the PAL version of NiGHTS but we hear rumours that there may be more Debug Modes and secrets lurking within Sonic Team's dreamy creation.



1. On the Sonic Team screen press A, B, Right, A, C, A, Down, A, B, Right, A (ABRA-CADABRA).
2. If done correctly, you should hear "Aptiva!" as if you ran out of time.
3. Then at the title screen press Up, Down, Left, Right, A+Start.
4. You should hear a Sonic 1 chime indicating the completion of the code.
5. Now highlight one of Elliot's dreams and press X, Y, Z, Y, X.
6. Press Start.
7. As Elliot, pause the game and press Right, A, Left, Left, Y (RALLY).
8. Press Start.
9. Collect 50 Gems and jump.
10. In midair, Pause the game.
11. A debug menu appears,allowing you to change the time limit, take away the alarm eggs and access all levels in the normal mode and in the 2P Vs. Mode!





PARODIUS DELUXE PACK

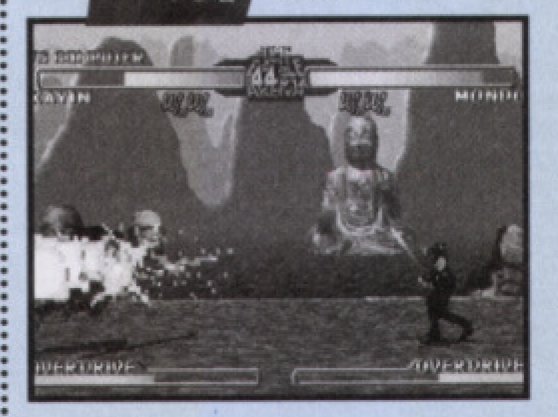
To power-up your ships in Konami's crazy shoot-'em-up frenzy, perform the following cheat:
1. Pause the game.
2. Press Up, Up, Down, Down, Left, Right, Left, Right, B, A, Start.

TOSHINDEN URA

EXTRA CHARACTERS

Here's an exclusive cheat for the latest Toshinden title. These codes give you an extra four characters to choose from. As these are the bosses they are extra hard, and have some really cool special moves. Enjoy!!

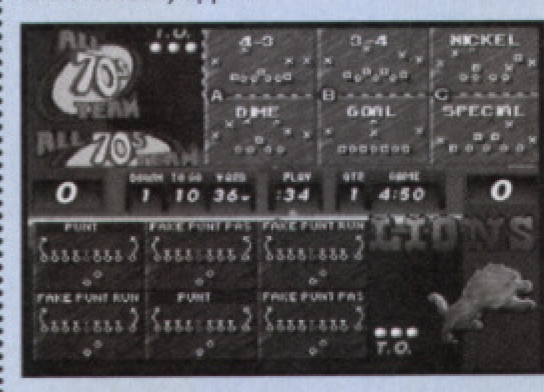
On the PRESS START screen enter **A, B, Z, X, Y, C** to activate Wolf and Replicant. To control Sho and Vermilion, enter **A, Z, C, X, B, Y** then **A, Y, C, X, B, Z**. A chime will sound when the code has worked. Go to the character selection screen and four new fighters will now be selectable.



MADDEN'97

SECRET TEAMS

Enter these codes to find a couple of extra teams. Each team has top player's making the Super Bowl much easier to win.
1. At the Select Team screen hold Z and press X. This will select a random team
2. If you press it enough times, secret teams will eventually appear.



What other secrets does NiGHTS hold? We want to know!

CYBERSPEED



PASSCODES FOR HARD SKILL LEVEL

Use the codes below to select a Hard Skill Level with the Supership (Speed=9):

2. 4XVHBBBCDBCDBG
3. 4YVRBBCDFCDDBJ
4. 4OWOBCCFGCDDBL
5. 41W7BDDGGCDFBN



6. 43XGBDDGHCFGBQ
7. 44XNBFDHJCFGBS
8. 46YZBFFHKDHGBV
9. 47Y5BGFJLDHGBX
10. 49ZDBHFKLFHGBZ

DAISY THE COW

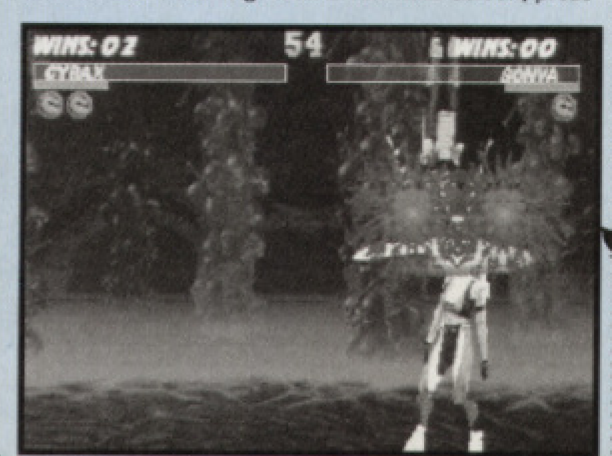
A truly bizarre cheat but well worth a quick look:

1. On the Options screen, choose Load and press X.
2. Tap the L button fourteen times.
3. Now you can play as Daisy the Cow!

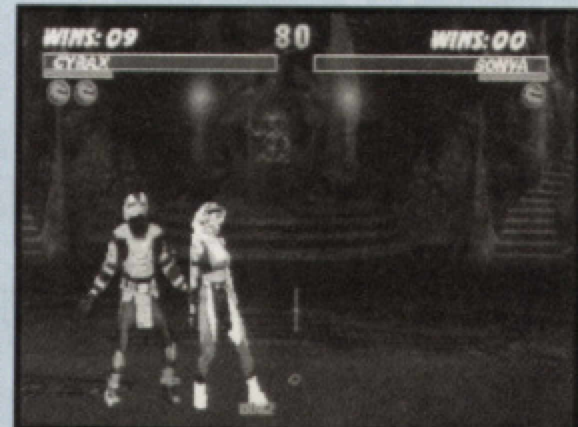
ULTIMATE MORTAL KOMBAT

HIDDEN OPTIONS MENU

This hidden menu let's you change the fatality time and access hidden fighters. On the title screen, press



C, R, A, Z, Y, C, Y, R, A, X (CRAZY CYRAX). Now go to the options screen and press Up to enter the menu. I bet this will please a lot of you out there.



EARTHWORM JIM 2

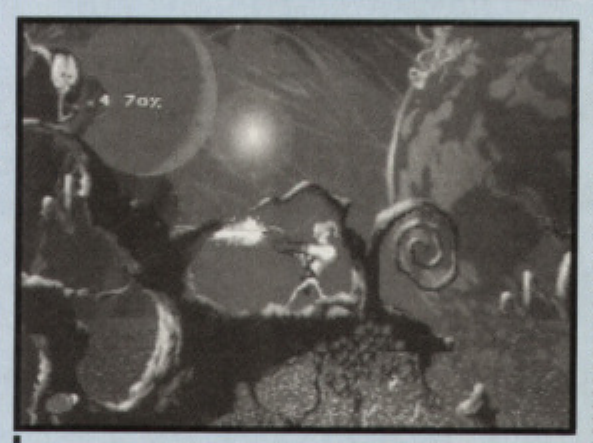
LEVEL CODES

Thanks to **Paul Mermelstein** who supplied **MEAN MACHINES** with all these sexy **EWJ2** level codes.

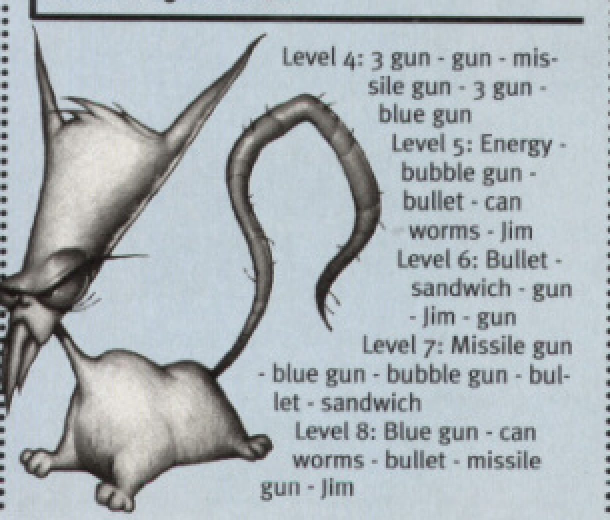
Level 2: (Normal) gun - energy - blue gun - sandwich - can worms
Level 3: Bubblegun - sandwich - sandwich - bubble gun - energy



Where's our 32 bit Earthworm Jim, eh? We want a 3D polygon worm to play with, don't we lads? Lads?



These level codes should see you safely through the trickiest stages in EWJ2.



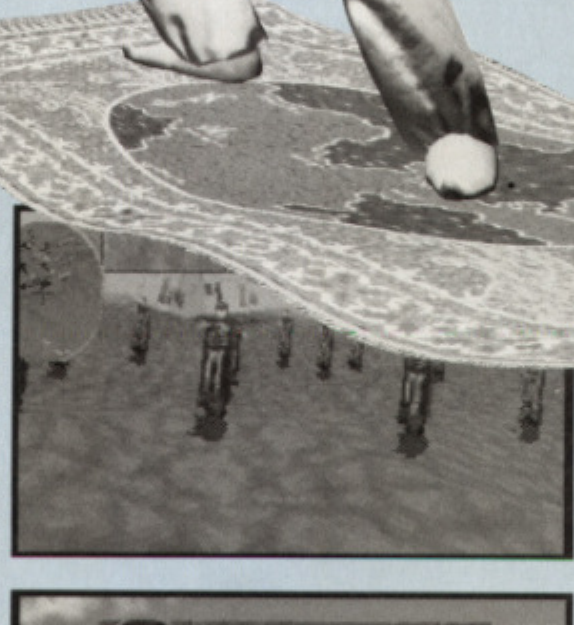
Level 4: 3 gun - gun - missile gun - 3 gun - blue gun
Level 5: Energy - bubble gun - bullet - can worms - Jim
Level 6: Bullet - sandwich - gun - Jim - gun
Level 7: Missile gun - blue gun - bubble gun - bullet - sandwich
Level 8: Blue gun - can worms - bullet - missile gun - Jim
Level 9: Bullet - gun - missile gun - bullet - Jim
Level 10: Sandwich - gun - Jim - blue gun - blue gun
Level 11: 3 gun - bullet - bubble gun - energy - bubble gun
Level 12: Missile gun - energy - bullet - energy - energy

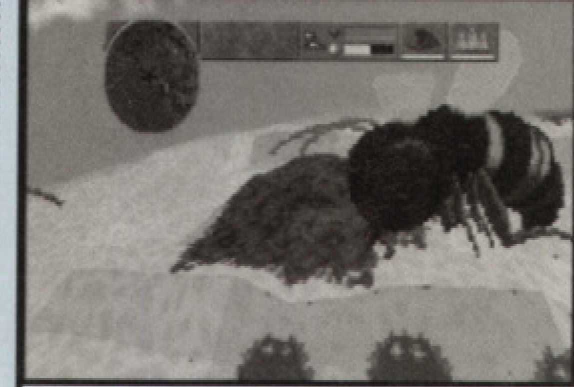


MAGIC CARPET

CHEAT MENU

This cool cheat allow you to enter a hidden cheat where you can power up your players spells and skip levels. To access the menu you must play these sound effects in this order: 11, 31, 15, 5, 26, 22. Now start the game and pause it, press X to gain all of the spells, Y to finish the level and Z to receive loads of Mana. Wicked to the max man!!





Bullfrog's classic carpet ride is still a top Saturn title. Use this cheat for some super spells.

NEW Q&A COLUMN

A new section will be introduced to the tips pages soon. This will answer any specific game queries you might have. If you're stuck on a level, can't perform a super attack or just need a general helping hand, write to me and your letter shall be printed and answered. Label your queries: PLEASE HELP ME PHIL! and them to the address at the top of the page.



TOMB RAIDER
TIPS AND SECRETS





To open the door in the background you need to find four different keys. Here's Lara opening the first lock.

LARA TECHNIQUES

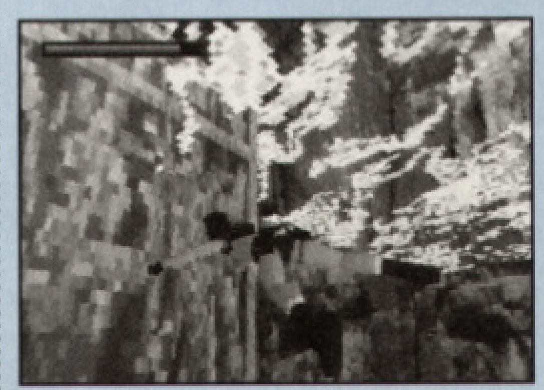
There are certain gameplay techniques that can be used in most levels to make it easier. Most of these are common sense, but just in case...

SAFE SHOOTING
Many times when you encounter an animal, there will be a raised area where you can shoot from, with it unable to reach you. As soon as a creature appears make for the raised area. Pause before descending into any large room, to see if any hidden creature makes an appearance.



BAITING
Creatures you are fighting will often run away. If you are raised, you can normally 'bait' them back into your line of fire by hanging off a platform/ledge. A similar technique can be used underwater by jumping in close to somewhere you can quickly escape from.

DIAGONAL JUMPING
It's often difficult to judge Lara's angles when jumping, so make it a routine practice to use the camera override which shows Lara's exact orientation. A common way of dying is missing a platform when you thought Lara was jumping straight ahead.



Underwater antics here as Lara finds a submerged doorway. Typically, a crocodile will sneak up on her any second.

WATER CREATURES
It's easy to get rid of most underwater creatures by shooting into the water from the edge. When swimming spend as little time on the surface as possible, as Lara is more vulnerable.

SPIKES
It is possible to walk amongst spikes, but not run or lower yourself into them. The one exception to this is the spike pit on the Colloseum, which has a gap to allow you to fall into it.

FALLING DISTANCES
Anything beyond a couple of blocks height is going to injure Lara. The safest way to judge distances is to lower lara over an edge and see her shadow. She will survive if her shadow is visible, but if it's at its smallest, she may sustain a little injury.



Hanging onto a ledge by her fingernails, Lara knows she's safe thanks to her extra strong nail varnish.

PERFECT JUMPING
There is no need to guess the timing for running jumps. If you walk to an edge and jump back, Lara will have exactly the right distance to jump, if you press jump as soon as you begin running.

OVERJUMPING
Sometimes a running jump will have too much momentum, often causing Lara to miss a ledge. For gaps that are only a single block's width, always use a standing jump.

AIMING DOWN
Sometimes Lara refuses to target creatures far below you. Using the camera override button while shooting seems to help overcome this feature.



More lions stalk around the deserted Colloseum. Luckily Lara can shoot them from the safety of this big pit.

SAVING SAVES
The save points within Tomb Raider are deviously placed so that saving your game as soon as you come across one is not always a wise policy. There is often a major task just ahead and it is often better to go back and save it after you have completed this. Once used, a save point is lost for good. The starkest example of this is St. Francis' Folly.

THE INCAN SCION CAVES

A simple level to ease you into the game that you should be able to walk through. The route into the caves requires you to climb the rock face on the left-hand side as you turn the first corner. Your first encounter with bats follows soon after. At the end of this corridor, jump down into a large chamber with a small pit on the far side. This leads to a door controlled by the single switch.



The next room is a pit you can pull yourself out of. Follow this to a large room with two bridges. You can shoot a pair of wolves from the bridges and leave by the far end. A running jump takes you over the bear pit. On the left-hand side of the stairway is a medi kit. The next room has a simple timed switch mechanism to a large door.

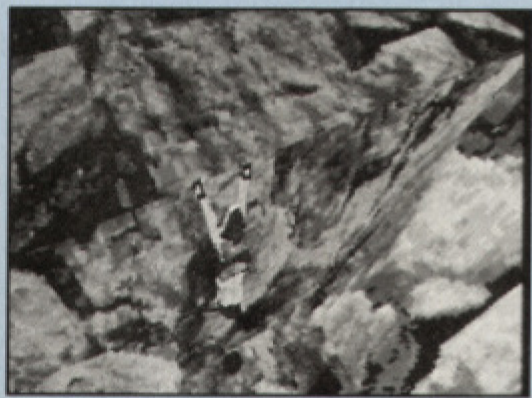
The last section of the level involves falling through the false floor tiles, running to the far end of the rectangular room upper level and jumping across. There is a door switch at the far end of this side.

SECRETS

1. In the first snow-covered room there is a small alcove in the far left corner which can be reached by jumping off a rock.
2. In the cave area with the bats, there is raised ledge to the left. This is proving elusive for us to reach.
3. In the room with the dense foliage, there is a discreetly marked ante room reached by jumping to a protuding platform on the left.

CITY OF VILCABAMA

Walk into a lupine ambush. Generally, the best tactics for multiple attackers is to stay airborne with side somersaults. Most animals move to slowly to get a fix on you. Also, the 180 degree roll allows you to spin and fire quickly.



Running jumps often leave Lara dangling precariously from rocky ledges. Slide along to locate hidden entrances.

Run across the area with the small pool, heading for the switch. Climb the wooden steps and jump across the gap with a running jump. Do a second jump to reach the skull-adorned alcove. Below is a stone you must push all the way through to create a platform to reach the higher levels. But there are two keys tucked away on ground level.



Next, go back to the pool room. Walk carefully towards the stable area to draw the bear out, then head straight for the pool. Swim down the right hand corridor, looking for the light filtering through the water on the far right end. Pull the switch to open a trapdoor. In the room above use the switch, and wait for the bear to sense you. Once he's in, close the door and somersault back into the water. No more bear troubles in the stables.

Go along the most ornate corridor and use the iron key in the lock. The following chamber has three rooms, visited in the order of left, right, middle. Ascend the leftmost room to find a switch that opens the right room. Lower yourself down to avoid injury. In the right room, you don't need to use the collapsing tiles to climb up. When you lower yourself down from the higher level here, make sure the second level of ledging is beneath you.



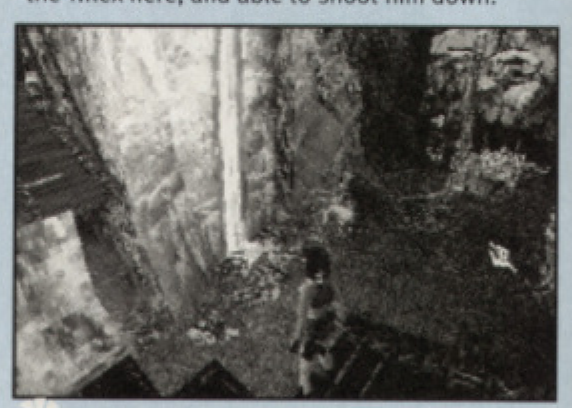
The entryway to the third room is trapped. Three razor pendulums swing ahead of you. Walk to the centre of the platform before and tap forward to run through the blade. At the far end a switch will plunge you into water. In the next room pool, there is a passage to the right, leading to a set of steps. On the upper level is a switch needed to open the level door. You can also shoot the bear from here. Lower yourself down and run up the stairway on the far right corner to pick up items. Return to the pool room and use the idol key you collected earlier.



Sliding down cliffs doesn't give you much control, but a well timed jump can sometimes lead to a hidden area too.

THE LOST VALLEY

Dive into the river, which sweeps you over the waterfall. Pull yourself out at the edge of the falls and shoot the wolves. Head through the narrow ravine and pull yourself up the cliff face. On the other side of the rise is the valley proper. Prepare for a 'raptor attack as you turn the first corner. There are four raptors within the entire valley. After killing two, walk towards the broken rope bridge, which should rouse the T.Rex. Run back the way you came, climbing into the narrow alcove on the left-hand wall. You are safe from the T.Rex here, and able to shoot him down.



Now you have three cog pieces to find. The first is in the temple at the far end of the valley, submerged in the right hand part of the ornamental pool. When you leave the temple you will see an opening half-way up the cliff on the right. Enter this and find yourself on the broken rope bridge. You must take a running jump and grab to catch the other side. The cog is there. The final cog is found through a passage in the wall near one of the large waterfalls. You come to a small pool with a pinnacle rising behind it. Scale this to find the final piece.

Now take the cogs back to the level starting point. Follow the stream in the opposite direction by jumping across it several times. The cogs can be fitted into a mechanism and the switch pulled, changing the flow of water. Climb down to the water's edge and you can take a shotgun from beside the skeleton. Swim along this passage, which goes underground for some time, emerging in a secret room. Swim back and jump over the water gate, into the dried stream bed. Climb down to the waterfall and take the newly revealed passage into Qualopec.

SECRETS

1. In the furthest corner of the lost valley there is a tiny alcove to climb into.
2. Where you pick up the shotgun, swim along a long passage to find a high hidden room.
3. Jump from the bridge over the river onto the rocks at the source.

TOMB OF QUALOPEC

To reach the Scion you have three gates to open, blocking the passage to the left. Ahead of you is a stone ball which is triggered if you run towards it. The right gate is opened by the switch and leads to three puzzles. The right hand is the least complex. Push two blocks to reveal a switch, but beware the spikes. The middle way leads to a false switch which plunges you into a lower chamber, where a block must be relocated to allow you into the real switch room. The left hand room is the most complex. Lower yourself into the main room,



Qualopec's tomb holds the first piece of the Scion. Just reach out and grab it...

take the passage on the left. Standing jump across from the pillar into a higher passage and lower yourself onto the second pillar. Standing jump again to find the first switch. Return to the entrance room and pull the second switch. Return to the moved second pillar and make two diagonal jumps to reach the passage above the spikes. On your way back, don't attempt to jump back on the pillars, it's safer just to jump down. The left hand passage on the initial room is now open. From here it's a quick jog past some statues to the Scion held in the throne room. Grab the piece, avoid the falling masonry and head back to the waterfall, where Larson is ready to challenge you to a gunfight.

SECRETS

1. There is a secret room behind the first statue on the left at the foot of the stairs.





ST. FRANCIS FOLLY

Two lions prey on you from the start. Climb the small ridge on either side of the entrance hall as a safe spot. Now pull the block onto the near Omega tile. Nothing happens, but it is the first stage in opening a door. Now push it onto the far omega tile. A door opens at the far end. Inside, pull the switch but be prepared for three apes. There is a second switch here. Go back out and push the block off the omega tile so it is adjacent to the smallest pillar. Climb this and make running jumps onto the arch at the far end. You can travel to the door at the other end by jumping across the right hand side. Whenever there is a two block width gap, you need to take a running jump. Take this section calmly.



As soon as you see the giant stone ball trundling towards you, do a roll and then dash in the opposite direction.

Lara rides down a slope and into a water channel. Swim briskly to the far end pull yourself out. The switch drains the corridor and makes it easy to kill the croc. Use the baiting technique here to bring it into your sights. Now you are at the top of the folly proper. Save your game. You should see your task as two parts. First, go all the way down to the bottom, pulling the four switches that open four puzzle rooms. Next go all the way to the top and tackle each room in order. Do not use the middle placed save point first! Pull all the switches and use the bottom save point. Why not tackle the rooms as they open? Two reasons — you will need to do a lot more climbing and jumping, and Pierre Dupont will appear once you have two keys.



Take the folly slowly, as death is always in close attendance. Most of the jumps are running jumps, walking is advisable most of the time. Use the camera override to check you are facing correctly. Bats are a problem — they can easily knock you over an edge. To locate them, pull your guns and swing Lara round until she locks on. You cannot shoot a bat at very close range. Orientate yourself with a wall behind you and jump back to get some space between you and the bat. When it comes to shooting lions and Dupont on the ground level, the platform directly above that is the ideal place. Now the four rooms that make up the folly.



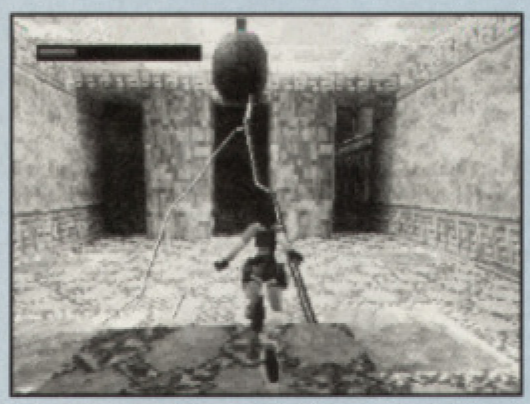
In the Damocles room you're likely to get skewered if you stop moving. Watch out for those fallen pillars too.



Neptune: Door: top level. Switch: mid level. Swim down quickly and pull the switch directly ahead. The key is on your left now, and the exit well straight ahead.

Atlas:Door: mid level. Switch: bottom level. As soon as the ball rolls towards you, use the 180 degree roll and start running to the pit. Jump back to hug the wall as the ball rolls over your head. The key is accessed by climbing up the gap on the left hand wall.

Damocles: Door: bottom level Switch: top level. Once you have the key, the safest way to negotiate the swords is to walk all the way back. To reach the central platform in the main room, you must do a standing jump from the raised bit outside this room

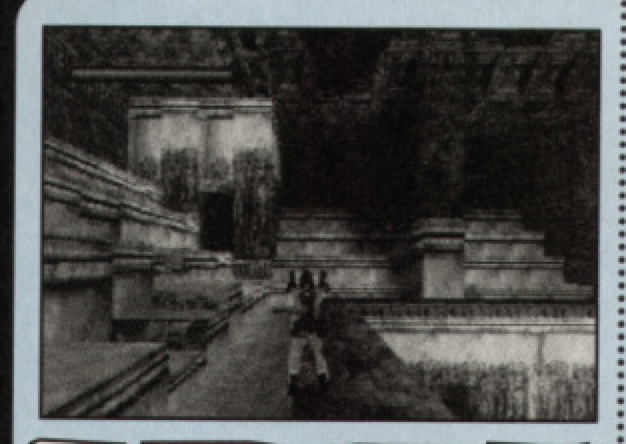


Thor: Door: mid level. Switch: mid level. Run passed the lightning ball. Stand on the tile below the hammer and wait until it falls. Push the block to the raised balcony, and then the other one so you can jump across the gap.

Once you have all four keys, you must fend off Dupont and insert them in the locks at the bottom.

SECRETS

1. In the first room, there is a room on the right hand side accessible from the first pillar on the right. You must do a back and forward flip off the slopes to grab the ledge above.
2. The trickiest secret room in the game, when you get to the end of the long slide, jump across the water.
3. In the middle of the water corridor, there is a hole to reach a small secret room.
4. In the Damocles room, climb onto the area above the key plinth.



THE COLLOSEUM

There are two crocs to kill in the water before you go swimming, and two lions once you get out. Get onto the pillared facade from the far left hand side, and there is a hole in the terracing to the second level nearby. Run to the end and jump down a small hole to your left in the cave wall. There are two crocs in a pit, easy meat. Pull yourself across the ledge on the left, then up.



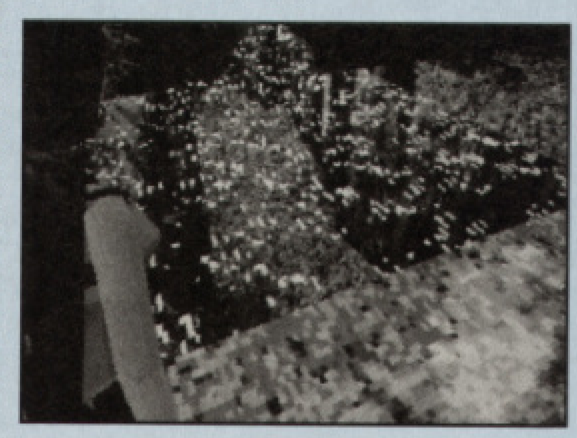
Lara tangles with a hungry lion in the Colloseum level. If they catch you with their claws, expect major blood loss.

Further along the corridor you will come to a gate with a switch. This way only leads back out to the facade, so run up the set of the stairs. Beware — Pierre is waiting for you. Kill as many animals from the auditorium as you can, then lower yourself into the pit and run to the north end. Down the passage is a room with two lions and two switches. The switch in the far wall opens a door at the south end of the pit. Head for this which contains an agility test. Step on the pad in the larger room, run straight to the switch in the left-hand room. Pull it and use the 180 degree roll, run into the right-hand room (ignore the pad) and do a forward roll to get behind the inner gate.

Alternatively! There is a sneaky way to avoid all this palaver. Go to the spike pit in the main arena. Lower yourself over the edge, but hold on, as watch to see when your shadow is in a narrow spike-free gap. You can drop into this with only a minor injury. Climb up to the uneven plateau and make a two stage diagonal jump that takes you to the balcony of the imperial box. Watch out for apes, then look out for a block to pull, revealing a switch.



Now you must visit the three corner rooms of the colosseum, each containing a puzzle. Start at the south end. When you enter the corridor, jump into the pit without hesitation. The second chamber is a series of jumps, but the trickier part is coming down. Always stand at least half way back from the edge to land safely on the lower platform. The last room leads to a short swim. Make sure you pull the switch as well.



Now return via the pit to the imperial balcony. There will be a new ape in the pit, so watch. From the balcony go through the door at the foot of the stairs, then use you key to open the gate across the water, leading to the next level.

SECRETS

1. As you pull yourself above the crocodile pit, stand up halfway through to find a small alcove and shotgun cartridges.

PALACE OF MIDAS

Entered via a water channel, leave the pool room in the palace and turn right, up the stairs into the main arena. After killing animals, jump across the pinnacles to reach the central area which has a panel of five switches. First, go below and pull the switch that allows you to reach this area again from ground level. The switches open the doors leading off this room by means of a code, shown on the tops of the doors.

Each of these rooms leads to a lead bar, which Lara needs to collect. The simplest of these is on the left, where the bar is at the other end of a long pool. Lara needs to jump across the fire-topped pillars which are de-activated for a short time when she crosses the 'start line'. The only way to reach the other side within this time is a continuous run-jump sequence. If Lara is touched by flame, she will continue to burn until dead or she plunges into the water.



Room three, the first on the right is the second simplest. Go throught the passage on the right of the room and pull out the block. A mechanism raises a sequence of pillars. The main danger here is running off a pillar. Make sure you stop pushing forward once in the air. The final pillar leads to an alcove, but an ape waiting inside is designed to try and push you off into the spikes.

The second from the left door leads to a whole separate area. First go to the far end, down stairs and pull the wood textured block. A horrendous din occurs. Now go all the way up the stairs and you will see the room has been wrecked. This allows you to jump across with a series of three diagonal jumps; first to the flat area on the right, then to the central column, and finally to a position near the exit on the far side. Now you are in a vast cavern containing an aquaduct. There are apes around the side and crocs in the water. The only thing of interest on this level is a secret room reached by swimming along the aquaduct, but I seriously recommend you take out the crocs first. Now you will have to lower yourself to the second level, only possible from the point you entered. Jump across through the arch to the other terrace. There are apes in the second and fourth alcoves. Now look across to wall opposite the terrace. There is a narrow ledge you can jump across and cling to. Jump across where the ledge is at its lowest. Pull yourself along until your shadow is visible. Climb up and turn, there is a passage on the opposite side.



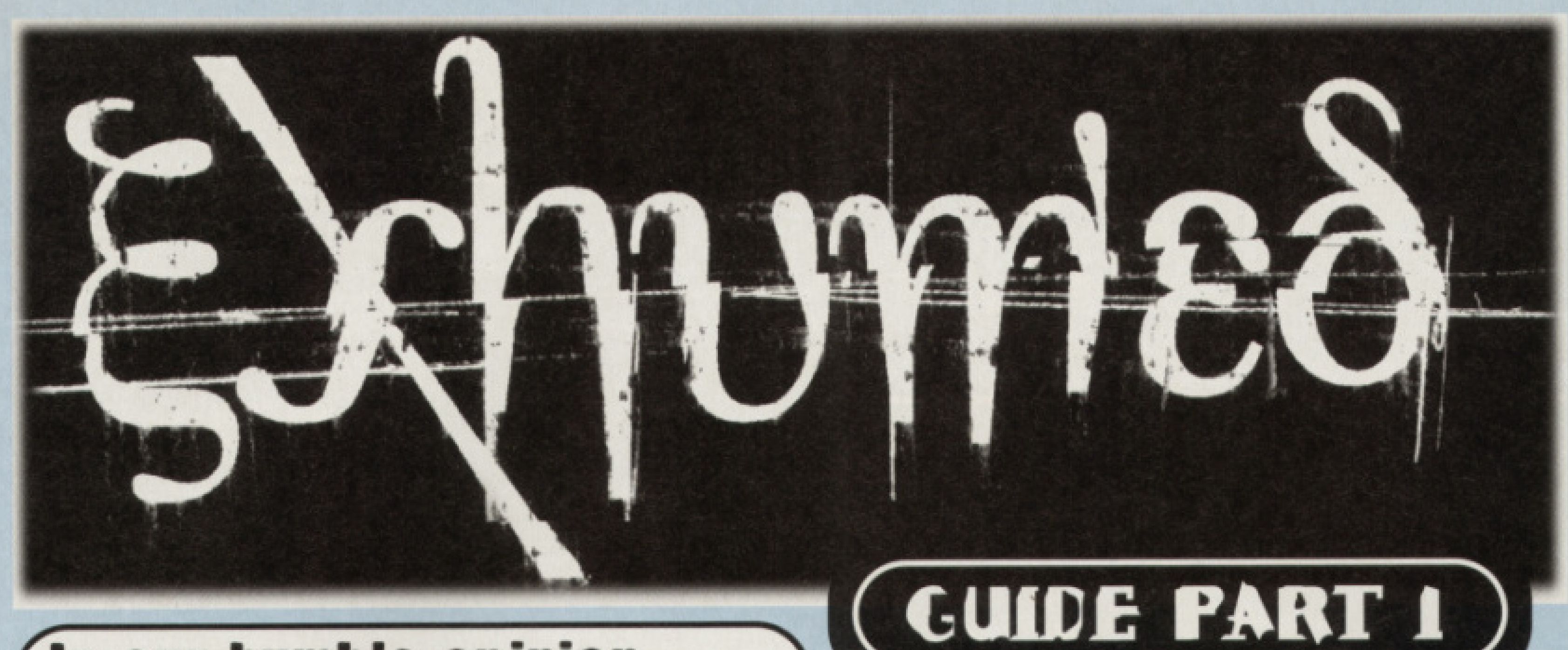
Run along an interminable corridor until you come to an oval shaped area. There are collapsing tiles here. On the other side you will soon be on the roof of a temple, where the iron bar is. Lower yourself from here (watch the animals) and walk through the door to the switch. This opens the garden area which leads off from the initial pool room. Go back there and climb onto the balcony at the far end of the garden. There is a hidden passage leading to the Midas room. Take your three iron bars to the edge of the broken hand of Midas, one at a time, and they will be turned to gold. Take all three bars back to the main room, where the final door, the one with the large balcony overhead, is your port of call. Use your three gold bars to open the door.

SECRETS

1. When lowering yourself at the Aquaduct, there are two shotgun cartridges discreetly located.
2. At the end of the aquaduct is a room where a series of perfect jumps across sloped banks enables you to find some cartridges.

NEXT MONTH

The conclusion to Tomb Raider is next month, with Egypt and Atlantis fully explored!



GUIDE PART 1

In our humble opinion, Exhumed out-Quakes Quake as a one player game.

It's also rock 'ard, so we figured you might need a little assistance. Rather than a complete walk through, we've presented this guide as a series of annotated maps. It was Ste's idea, so blame him if you still get stuck.

GENERAL TIPS

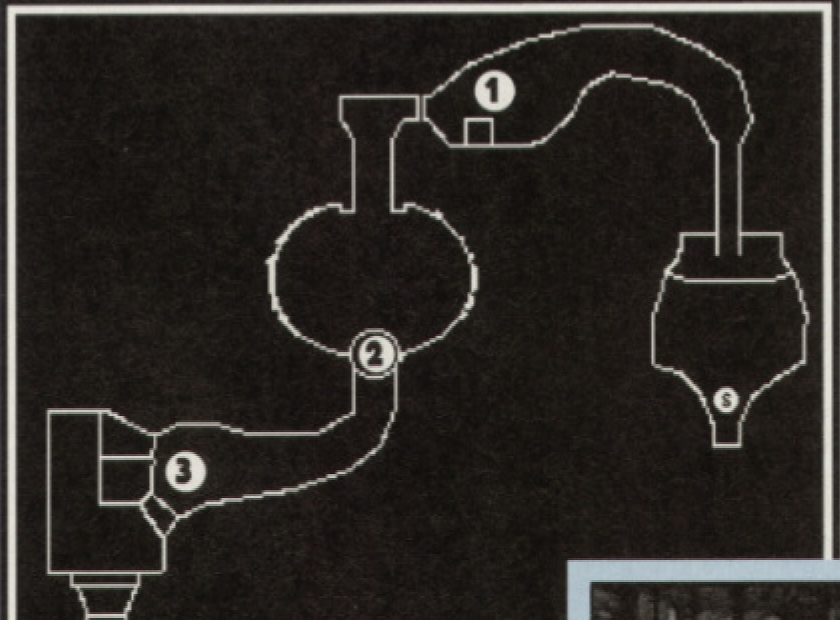
JUMPER ROUND

For precision jumps, it's often easier to look down slightly as this enables you can see exactly where ledges are located. You may also want to overlay the map, because the arrow on it gives your exact position.

MY TRUSTY SWORD

The only weapons you can use underwater are the machete, Amun Bombs and the Cobra Staff. If you have to take on fish with the knife, coming at them from slightly below seems to be the best way of hitting them. Similarly, look down slightly when carving up spiders.

Because you get a random power-up whenever you destroy a container, you may find yourself running low on health or weapon power. To avoid this, only collect power-ups when really necessary (in other words, don't grab a large weapon power icon if you only have a sliver of your power gauge to fill). You may also want to keep your favourite weapon fully charged, but make sure there is some power in the others in case you need them.

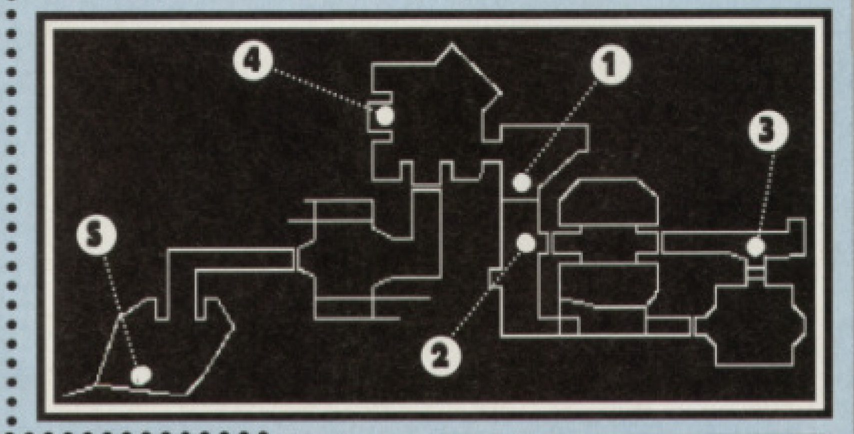


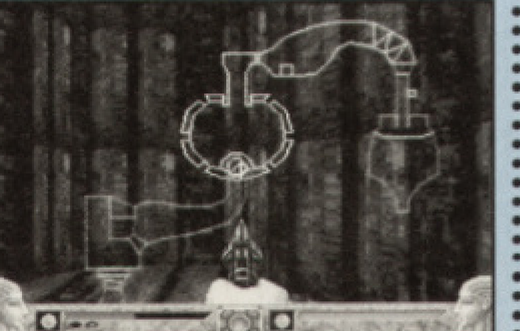
This level is ludicrously simple. Pick up the pistol at point one, then take the lift down at point two. Shoot at the skulls at point three to blast your way through to the next room.
The next door on your left is opened by a switch next to it, then the rest of the level is a simple walk through to Rameses and the end of the stage.

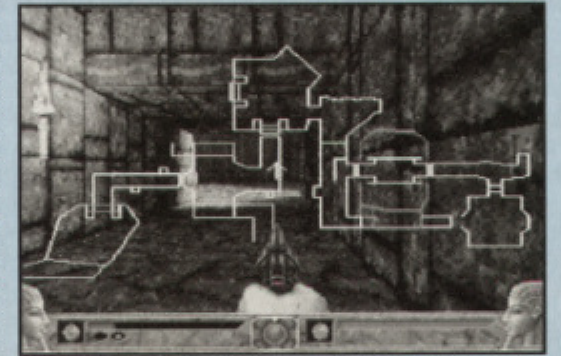


KARNAK (1st VISIT)

Your first visit to Karnak is also fairly straightforward. Go to point one and shoot the skulls to blow through the wall. At point two, a door on your left leads to a bridge over a pool of water. Go through the door ahead and you'll find a camel waiting at point three.



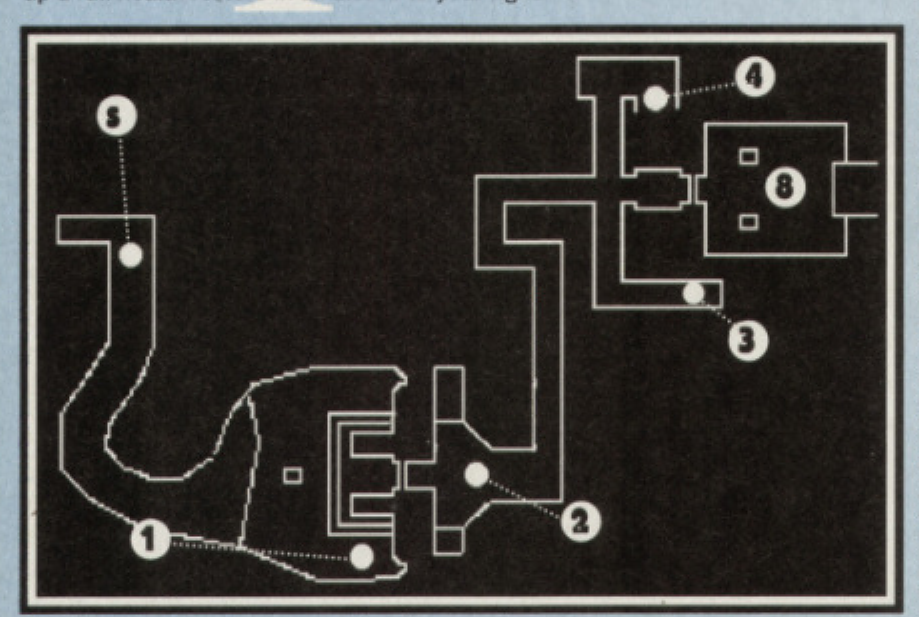




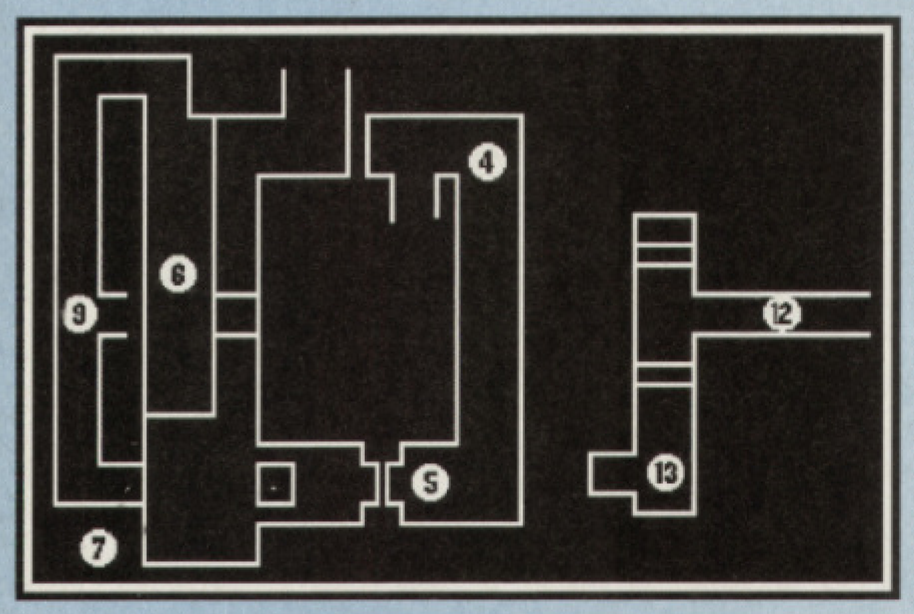
"Hello...erm, I'm stuck on this game, erm, can you help...

KARNAK SANCTUARY

Now things start getting slightly more complex. Pick up the M60 and the Symbol of Power at point one, then shoot the skulls at point two to blow through the wall. Make your way to point three where you'll find loads of power-ups and the Symbol of Time. Change maps at point four, then go through the Time door at point five. Go up to point six, avoiding the toxic river to your right, then take out the Annubis guard and go through the passageway behind it to point seven. Ahead of you, there's a floating platform bearing the Symbol of War. A well timed jump is required to reach this, but if you can stop on the platform, you can pick up a full health restore in an alcove to your right.

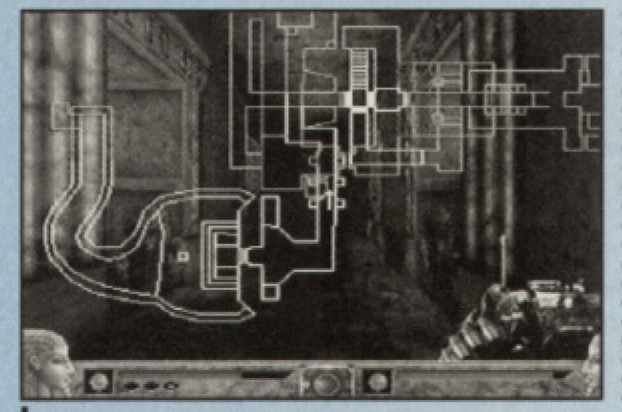


Now you have the War symbol, you can enter the room at point eight. In here you'll find the Symbol of Earth, the corresponding door for this symbol is at point nine. When you reach point ten, a fireball will shoot out from underneath you and destroy some skulls ahead. This becomes a regular sequence of fireballs; you have to time your jump and run so it avoids them and don't stop until you reach either point eleven.

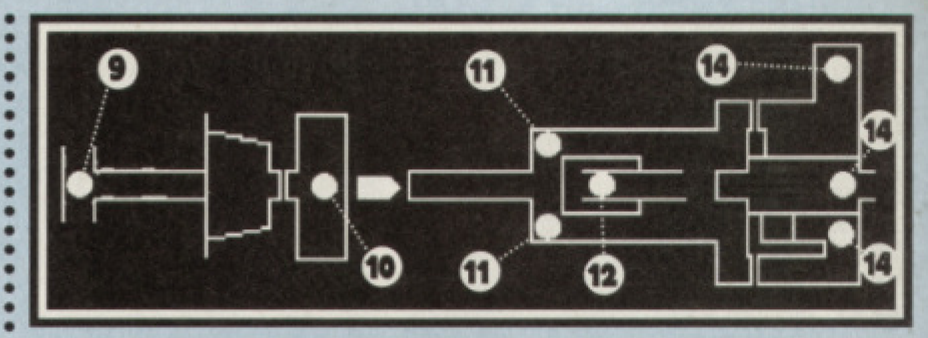


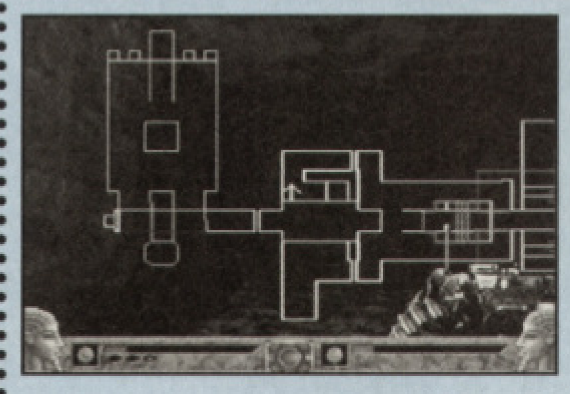
From here, change maps at point twelve, then go and hit the switch at point thirteen. This will open a wall enabling you to go and hit another switch at point fourteen. This opens another wall to clear your way to point fifteen, at which point you'll have to climb up to point sixteen and change onto the final map.

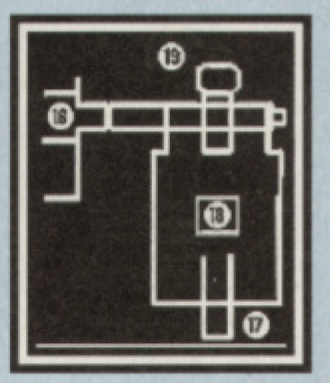
Pick up the Sandals of Ikumptet at point seventeen. They give you extra jumping power, to enable you to hop onto the moving platform at point eighteen, then across to the purple pyramid at point nineteen which will warp you back to Rameses' tomb. After Rameses has said his piece, it's worth returning briefly to the Sanctuary. If you turn left inside the first door, you can jump up and collect an Ankh, which extends your life gauge. Very handy. After this, go back to the camel, and then Karnak.



The map overlay is useful but can obstruct your vision on more complex levels. Like this one. Help, I can't see!

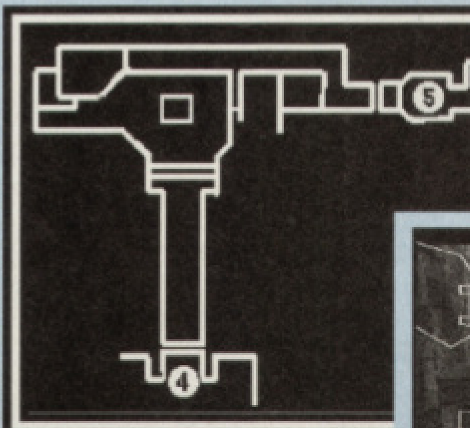


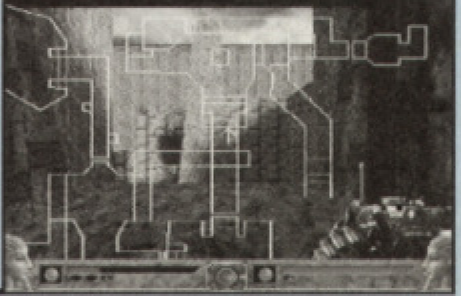




KARNAK (2nd VISIT)

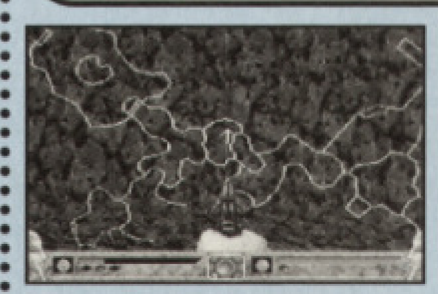
Go to point four on the first Karnak map. Now open the door ahead of you, run down the tunnel, turn left, climb the stairs on your right and open the door ahead to reach the camel at point five.





Here we see the Karnak obelisk in all it's glory. It's just a big lump of stone.

SOBEK PASS



Waste the spiders on your way up to point one, where you'll find more spiders and a load of power-up jars. You'll soon be attacked by a flying wasp creature, which is a pain to kill up close, so try to keep your distance. After this, go to point two and shoot at the skulls to clear your way. Two careful jumps are needed to get you across to point three, where you'll pick up the Symbol of War. Return the way you came and change maps at point four.

Next make your way up to point five, where you'll find a full weapon power icon behind some skulls. You'll also get hassled by more wasp things here. Then go down and across the bridge to point six, the Symbol of War door. Inside the next room, jump up to point seven then across to point eight where you'll pick up the Symbol of Time. Be careful when you drop off this ledge, as a wall underneath it will have opened, revealing loads more spiders.

The next thing to do is collect the first piece of your transmitter. Start by walking halfway across the bridge until you are adjacent to point nine. Jump across to point nine and then hit the switch ahead of you. If you turn around, you'll see another platform under the bridge; jump onto this, and then over to point ten, where you'll find another switch. Carefully drop down to point eleven, then pick up the transmitter piece at point twelve. To get back to the bridge, carefully retrace your steps to point nine, then jump up to a small platform to your right, then you should be able to jump back up to the bridge at point six.

Next, return to point one, then climb up to point thirteen. You'll see some boulders tumbling down the hill. They shouldn't hit where you are standing, and if you time it just right, you can run up to point fourteen safely. From here, there is one more rock to avoid as you go up to point fifteen, to the Time door. Go through to pick up the Symbol of Power, but try not to stand on the floor panel in this room or you'll activate a load of fireballs in the rooms you just came through. You have to go back through these rooms to reach the Power door and the camel at point seventeen.

SOBEK MOUNTAIN SHRINE

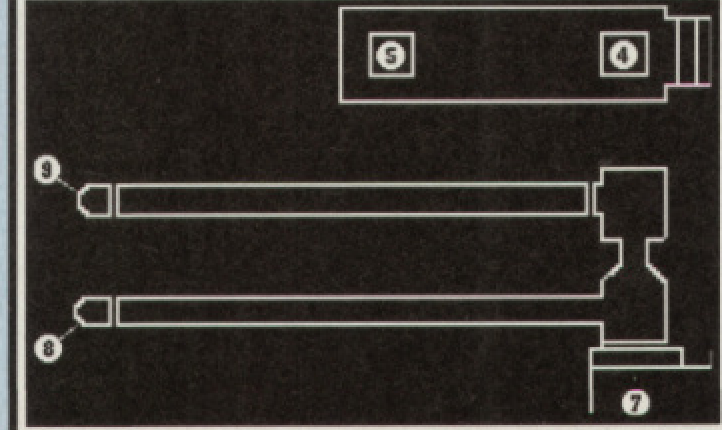
Make your way to point one, where you'll find the Symbol of War. Also in this room is a switch that turns off a deadly forcefield elsewhere in the level. Whilst you're taking out the bad guys in this level, you may also be ambushed by a wasp. After this, go to point two, and shoot at the skulls to proceed. The room at point three contains a lift, take this up and then go to point four. Here there is another lift, which will take you up to the corresponding point four on the top level map.

You'll see two forcefields and a floor panel. Step on the floor panel and a wall will open behind you. Hit the two switches behind this wall to lower the force-fields, then drop down the hole at point five.



You will land on a balcony over the room at point one. Hit the switch at this level, then drop down into the main room. The door that was locked last time is now open and you can go through to point six. Ahead, you'll see a lava pit with several tall pillars in it. Unfortunately you need to jump onto those pillars to get to point seven. A little perseverance is needed as these jumps are very tricky.

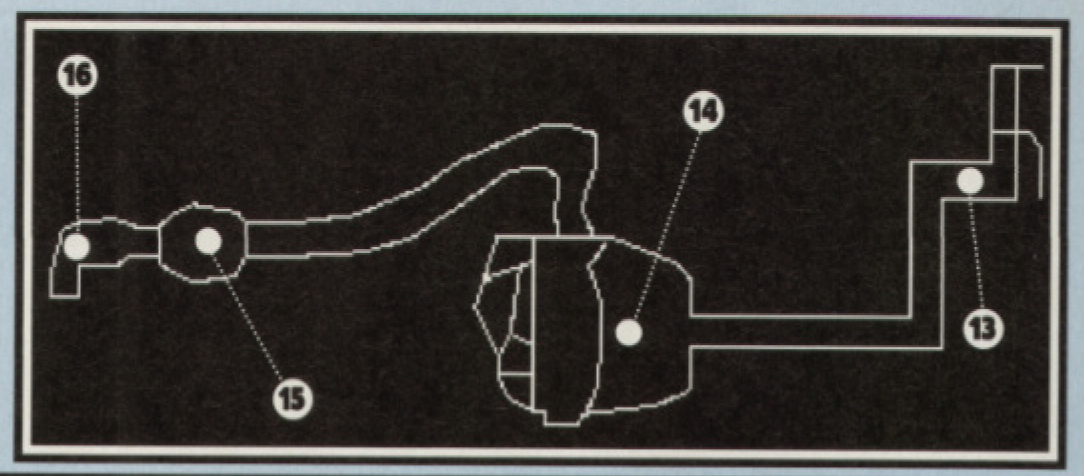
At point seven, shoot the skulls to blast through the wall, then go to point eight to get the Symbol of Power which you need to get



through the door to get to point nine, where you'll find the Symbol of Time. Go back along the walkway, drop into the room at point ten, where the Symbol of Time doorway is located. In the next room you'll pick up the Sobek Mask, which enables you to breath underwater. This is handy, since the way to the exit is via an underwater passage between the two points marked A on the main map. Walk into the purple pyramid and you'll be warped back to Rameses.

KARNAK (3rd VISIT)

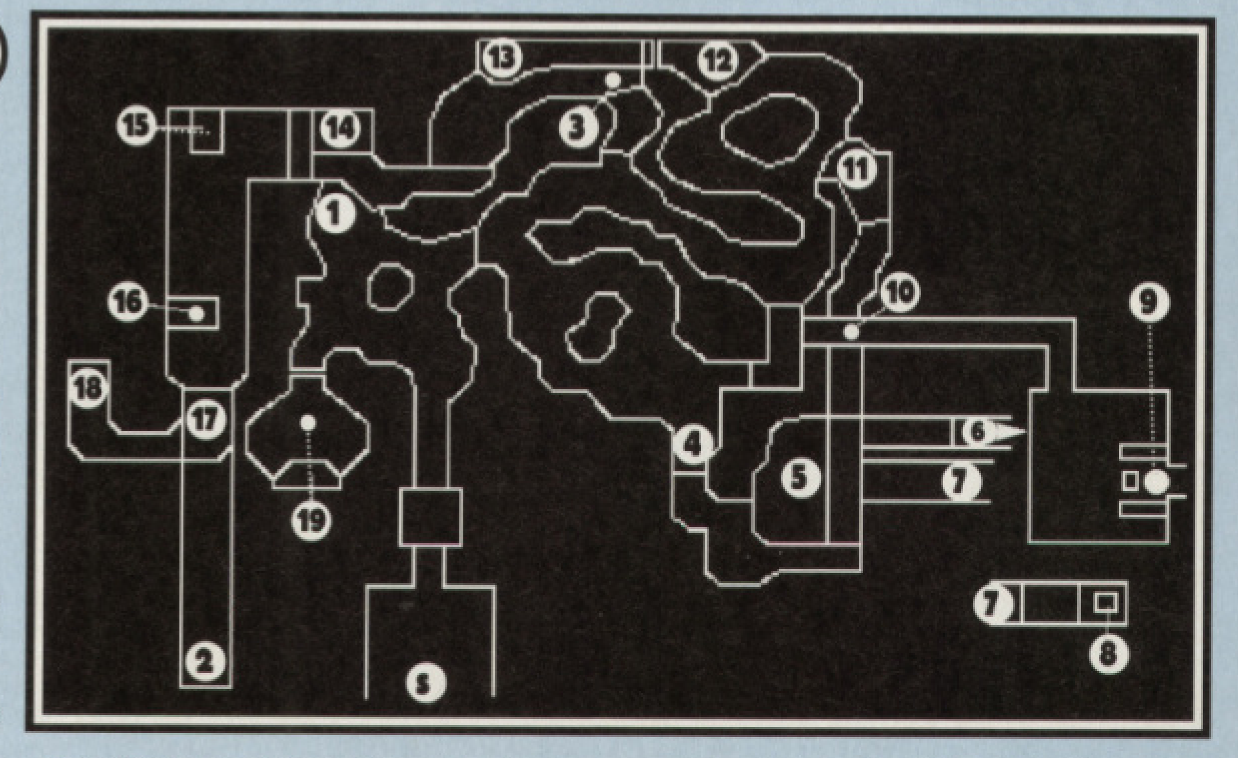
On your last visit to Karnak, you'll have noticed a pool of water on your right just before you got to the camel. Armed with the Sobek mask, this is no longer an obstacle. Dive in and you'll find that this underwater passage connects to two points mark A. You'll also find some fish down there, so ensure you have the machete selected. Once you surface, go to point six to pick up another Ankh, then pick up the Symbol of War at point seven. This triggers fireballs in the last room room, so be careful how you leave. Next, shoot at the skulls at point eight to blow through to an earlier part of the level. Open the huge door at point nine and take the left-hand passage uphill to point ten, where the War door is located. After dodging



some more fireballs, you'll come to point eleven. You now need to jump across to point twelve. Despite looking like a huge gap, it is actually quite easy to get across. Change maps at point thirteen, then go down to point fourteen. There are some power-ups to be had if you jump across the river, but to exit the level you need to go for a swim again. Evade the fish to reach point fifteen, and watch out for land based assailants as you surface. The camel can be found at point sixteen. And that's it for Karnak (at last!).

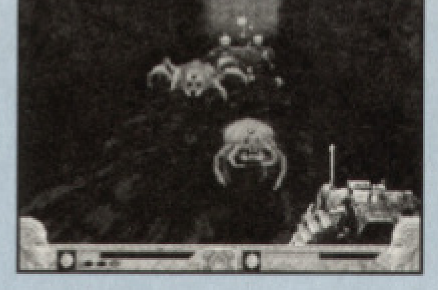
AMUN MINES

From the starting point, go forward into the lift then, when it reaches the bottom, machine gun your way to point one. Blow up the skulls to your left, then dive into the water. Kill the fish on your way to point two, where you'll find the Symbol of Earth. Once you're out of the briny, go through the Earth door to point nineteen (look, I accidentally forgot this one, okay?) and pick up the Amun Bombs. Next go to point three and throw a bomb at the section of wall covered in wooden panels. Make sure you're standing a reasonable distance away though, because the bomb creates quite a blast. Ahead there is another wall to blow through, then go to point four and repeat the process. After taking out the wasp creatures, jump into the water at point five and go down towards point six. You'll soon come to a switch, hit it and then swim upwards to get the second transmitter piece. Hurry back to the surface, because you'll be running out of air pretty soon. After you surface, go back underwater to point seven, then transfer to the corresponding point on the small map below. At point eight you'll hit a floor panel which will lower a pillar ahead of you. Then go to point nine to pick up the Symbol of War. At point ten, jump up to your right and take out the spiders to reach point eleven. From here, jump across to point twelve, noting as you go, a



large hole in the floor below which you need to return to in a couple of levels time. Once you reach point fourteen, two well timed jumps are required to get to fifteen and sixteen. At sixteen, a wall ahead of you will explode as a fireball bursts out. Time your jump to avoid the fireballs to get to point seventeen, then go to the camel at point eighteen. Then your off to Set Palace.

SET PALACE



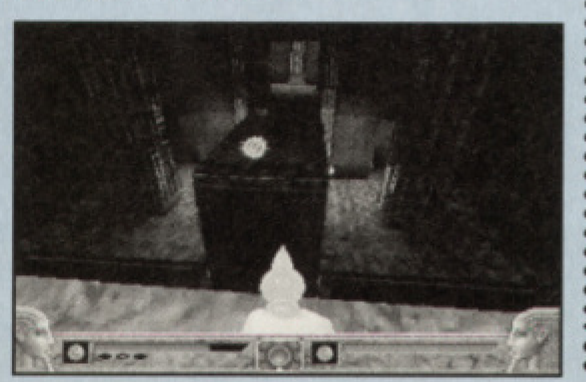


This level is fairly straightforward, for a change. Hit the switch at point one, then make your way to point two, taking out the mummies as you go. From here, follow the points in sequence to point eight, picking up the symbol at point four on the way. At point eight you can pick up another symbol, but doing this activates three fireballs ahead of you so prepare to run away sharpish. One of the fireballs will blow up a wall, clearing your path to point nine, where the Symbol of Time can be found. Next go through to point eleven, then turn back so you are facing the way you came. You should see a destructible way on the other side of the gap, so throw a bomb at it then jump across to pick up the third transmitter piece at point twelve. Finally go to the camel at point thirteen.

SET ARENA

Dead simple. Not that easy though. It's impossible to get lost on this level as there is only one route that leads to a huge arena. On your way you'll see full weapon and health restores balanced on pillars over a lava pit. If you jump on a pillar them immediately jump again to the platform on the other side of the pit. When you reach the arena you'll see a huge door to your left. As you approach this door it will open and a huge scary monster will leap out. Not only does it fire ghostly skeletons at you, it also jumps; temporarily paralysing you when it lands. This leaves you open to attack, so make sure you are on the opposite side of the arena when it takes off. The best way to kill the monster is to throw bombs at it, then finish it off with the machine gun. If you manage to pick up a weapon boost in the arena, you can simply hose the critter down with the M60. Once it's dead, a door will open opposite the monster portal. In here you'll find the Shawl of Isis, which lets you float to the ground if you hold the B button when in mid-air. You'll need to use this trick to cross the gap ahead, where you'll find a warp pyramid.







Every time you pick up an artifact you get warped back to old sarcophagus face here.

NEXT MONTH

Trapped in the Cavern of Peril? Stranded in the Canyons of Chaos? Well hang in there folks, because next month we'll have the second part of our Exhumed guide, including the locations of all the other weapons, artifacts and transmitter pieces(assuming Ste can find them). Stay tuned soldier!

DIRECTORY

This is The Directory. It's what we see as the Top 50 games available for your console, all worthy of purchase. These are not the only decent titles for the Saturn, but staying on this chart has an element of prestige.
The Directory is evolving as new releases force the lower echelons off the end into gaming obscurity. Come back each month to see the effect of improving software. There will, of course, always be a place for classic games — titles like Sega Rally and NiGHTS should stay on the Directory for years to come.
You may notice changes in the ratings from back issues, and indeed the directory ratings may change. We make no apology for this — games are rated relatively, and no reviewer can quite tell after a week or so how a game will age. We've assessed all the directory titles as harshly and as realistically as we can. Sometimes we've made mistakes — we're human — and the directory is the place to rectify them. It's also a court of appeal for the underrated.

1 Virtua Fighter 2



AM2's arcade classic. The sine qua non of 3D fighting games.

Reviewed: MM37
Tipped : MM41/42

96

2 NiGHTS



A breathtakingly original piece of action gaming from Sonic Team.

Reviewed: MM48
Tipped: MM49/50

96

3 Sega Rally



An exquisite driving game and an awesome AM3 conversion.

Reviewed: MM38
Tipped: MM42/43

95

4 Fighting Vipers



AM2's no-holds barred saucy brawl-'em-up.

Reviewed: MM49
Tipped: MM50

95

5 Tomb Raider



Forget FMV, this is what 'interactive movies' should be like.

Reviewed: MM50
Tipped: MM51

94

6 Exhumed



3D Egyptian Doom-fest of exceptionally rich game design.

Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: MM51

94

7 Street Fighter Alpha 2



Capcom's unparalleled and uncompromised arcade smash.

Reviewed: MM50
Tipped: MM50

94

8 Daytona USA Championship



Remixed and extended. Everything the original never was.

Reviewed: MM50
Tipped: N/A

93

9 Worldwide Soccer '97



Soccer in its most realistic and detailed form.

Reviewed: MM49
Tipped: MM50

93

10 Virtua Cop



Target-shooting gangster game with textbook playability.

Reviewed: MM37
Tipped: MM42

93

11 Actua Golf

Everything a golf gamer would want it to be.



Reviewed: MM49
Tipped: N/A

92

12 Bust-a-Move 2

Incurably infectious simple puzzle gameplay for two.



Reviewed: MM49
Tipped: MM50

92

13 Night Warriors

Stunningly sharp 2D beat-'em-up from Capcom.



Reviewed: MM44
Tipped: MM45

92

14 Olympic Soccer

Speed and action successfully emphasised.



Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: N/A

92

15 Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3

Comprehensive conversion that should please MK fanatics.



Reviewed: MM44
Tipped: MM48

91

16 Magic Carpet

Epic magical adventure, ingeniously assembled.



Reviewed: MM40
Tipped: MM51

91

17 Thunderhawk 2

Stunning war action, excellent 3D graphics.

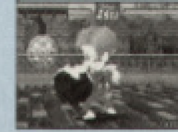


Reviewed: MM37
Tipped: MM39

91

18 Virtua fighter kids

Why? Don't ask, just play.



Reviewed: MM48
Tipped: MM50

91

19 Shining Wisdom

Graphics not important. Excellent story RPG.



Reviewed: MM40
Tipped:MM44/45/46/47

90

20 Panzer Dragoon Zwei

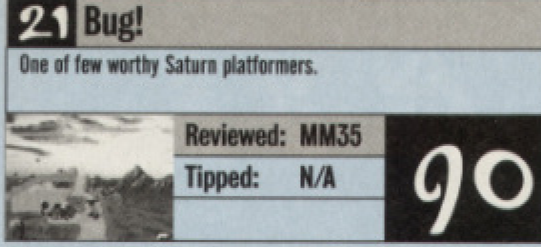
Awesome, but short, shoot-'em-up 'ride'.



Reviewed: MM43
Tipped: MM44

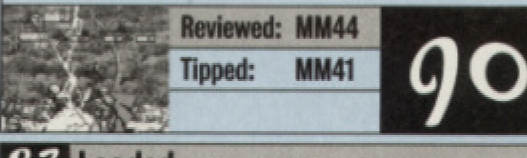
90

21 Bug!
One of few worthy Saturn platformers.



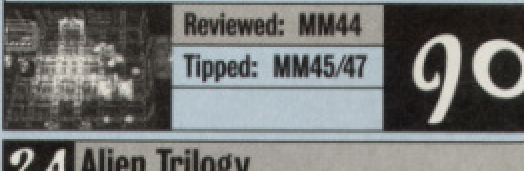
Reviewed: MM35
Tipped: N/A
90

22 Guardian Heroes
Quirky scrolling beat-'em-up. Treasure's legendary intensity.



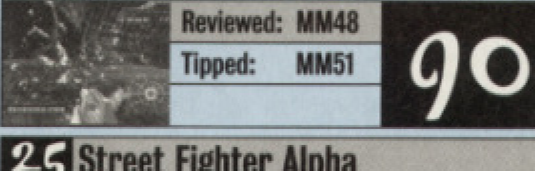
Reviewed: MM44
Tipped: MM41
90

23 Loaded
Relentless, sadistic plan-view shooter. Go berserk.



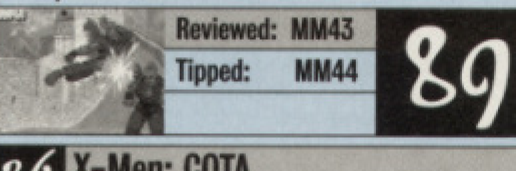
Reviewed: MM44
Tipped: MM45/47
90

24 Alien Trilogy
The chilling atmosphere papers over the graphical weaknesses.



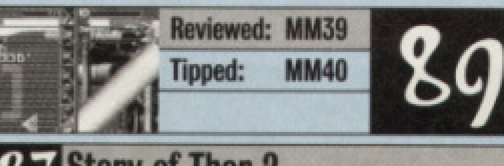
Reviewed: MM48
Tipped: MM51
90

25 Street Fighter Alpha
Overshadowed by it's big brother, but still up there with the greats.



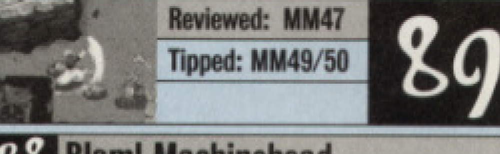
Reviewed: MM43
Tipped: MM44
89

26 X-Men: COTA
Classic 2D combat game let down slightly by its PAL format.



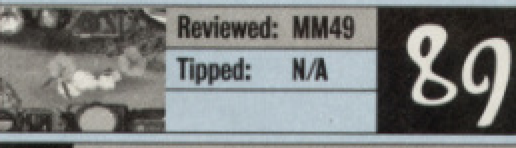
Reviewed: MM39
Tipped: MM40
89

27 Story of Thor 2
Precious gameplay hidden in the depths of this RPG.



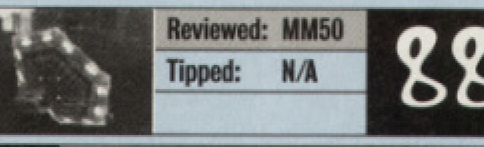
Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: MM49/50
89

28 Blam! Machinehead
Beefy blaster and the product of warped minds.



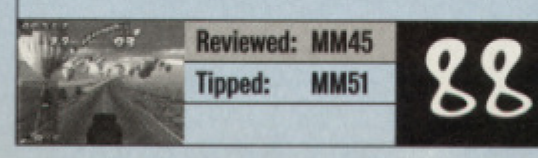
Reviewed: MM49
Tipped: N/A
89

29 A.M.O.K.
3D shoot-'em-up with Desert Strike's mission structure.



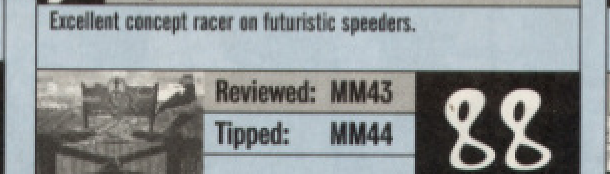
Reviewed: MM50
Tipped: N/A
88

30 Need for Speed
Reckless road racing with a highly developed sense of speed.



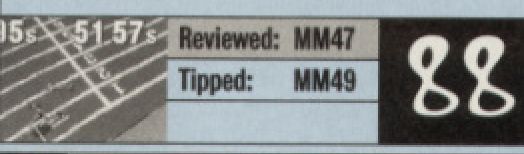
Reviewed: MM45
Tipped: MM51
88

31 Wipeout
Excellent concept racer on futuristic speeders.



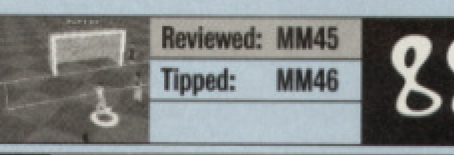
Reviewed: MM43
Tipped: MM44
88

32 Athlete Kings
Hi-res multi-sports action. Generally acclaimed.



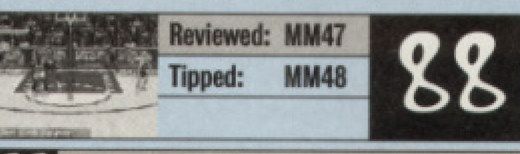
Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: MM49
88

33 Euro '96
Official football festival with plenty of supporters.



Reviewed: MM45
Tipped: MM46
88

34 NBA Action
Sega's underrated, but well made basketball sim.

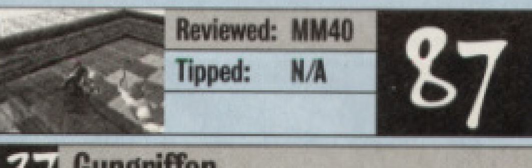


Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: MM48
88

35 Street Racer
The closest you'll get to Mario Kart on a Saturn

Reviewed: MM50
Tipped: N/A
87

36 Mystaria
Tactical Mech War in a heavy duty shooter.

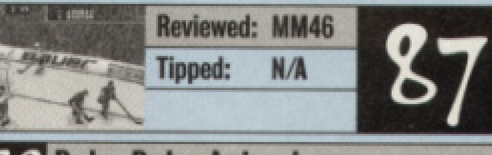


Reviewed: MM40
Tipped: N/A
87

37 Gungriffon
Ugly, amusing team strategy game with its hardcore fans.

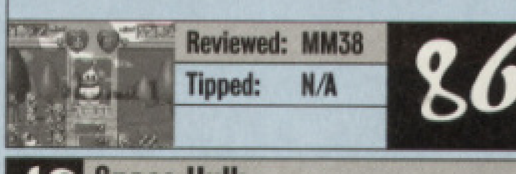
Reviewed: MM45
Tipped: MM46
87

38 NHL Powerplay Hockey '96
Fantastically slick adaptation of the sport to console.



Reviewed: MM46
Tipped: N/A
87

39 Baku Baku Animal
The coolest, maddest Tetris puzzler ever.



Reviewed: MM38
Tipped: N/A
86

40 Space Hulk
Spooky monster strategy/action game.

Reviewed: MM47
Tipped: N/A
86



41 Worms
Ugly, amusing team strategy game with its hardcore fans.

Reviewed: MM39
Tipped: MM49
86

42 The Horde
Nothing quite like this mad mock-medieval game of tactics.

Reviewed: MM42
Tipped: N/A
85

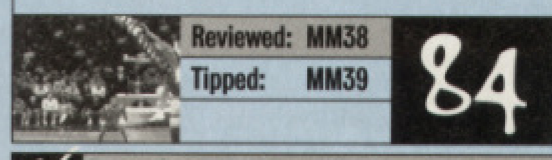
43 Sim City 2000
The classic city-builder game, but a tad slow.

Reviewed: MM37
Tipped: MM46
85

44 Valora Valley Golf
Golf given an edge by being set in Hell.

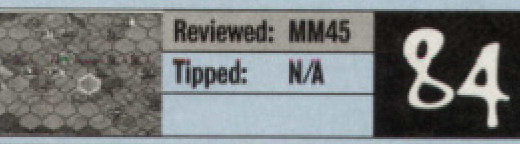
Reviewed: MM46
Tipped: N/A
84

45 NBA Jam TE
A faultless rendition of the old arcade game.



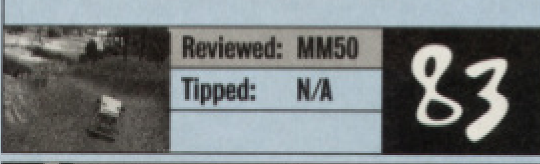
Reviewed: MM38
Tipped: MM39
84

46 Iron Storm
Fascinating Import war strategy game. Long and sweaty sessions.



Reviewed: MM45
Tipped: N/A
84

47 Hardcore 4x4
Like Junior Kickstart. But With big trucks instead.



Reviewed: MM50
Tipped: N/A
83

48 Theme Park
The only business simulation with any grin value.

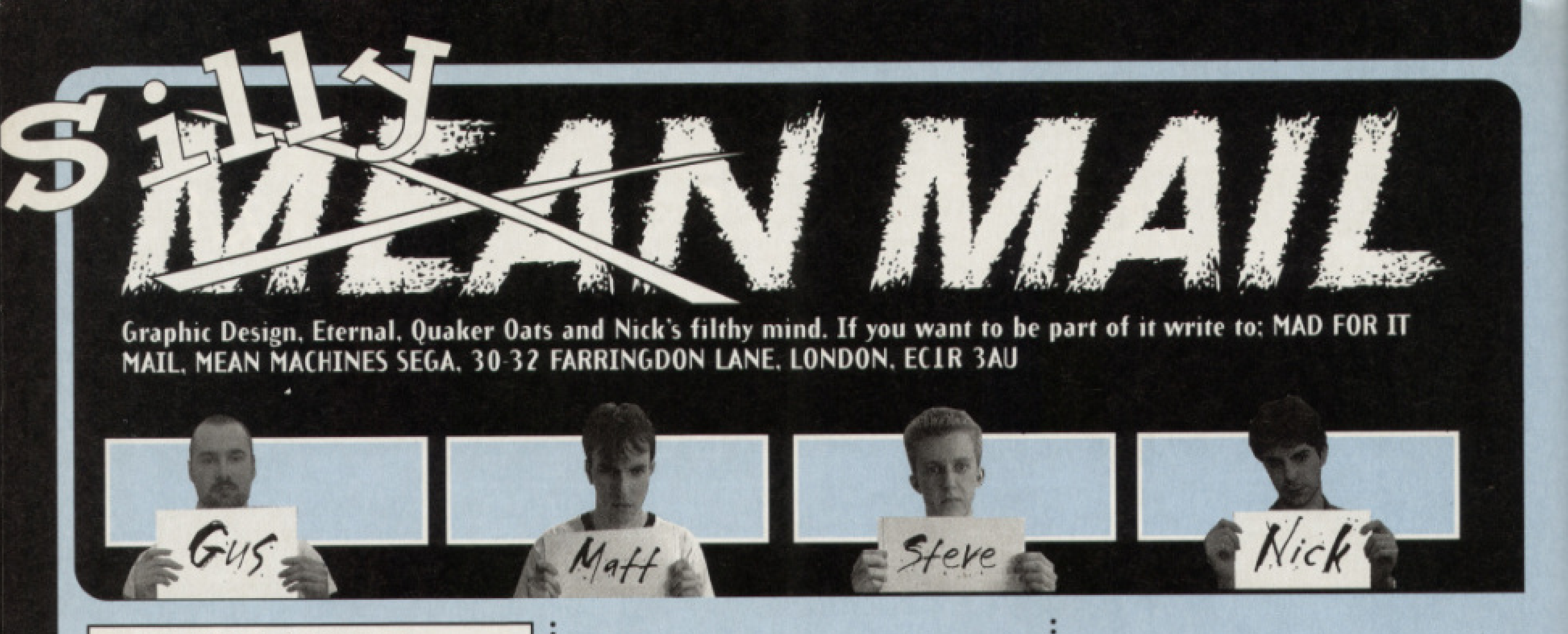
Reviewed: MM38
Tipped: MM44
83

49 Rayman
Conventional but pleasing platformer of the old school.

Reviewed: MM37
Tipped: MM38
82

50 FIFA Soccer '96
Rather discredited by newer titles, but still fun.

Reviewed: MM40
Tipped: MM41
82



~~Mean~~ Silly Mean Mail

Graphic Design, Eternal, Quaker Oats and Nick's filthy mind. If you want to be part of it write to: MAD FOR IT MAIL, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU

MISERABLE MONOCHROME

Dear Mean Mail,

Erm. Ah, a few comments on the New Look. Why the bloody bogwash hell is the new Mean Mail in black and white, there's no point printing any 'Mean Art' if it's in black and white. Natasha's Tails pic is the first decent bit of art in ages. I have to say it's a shame because I like the new format and Yob's Cplumn is a clever addition. With that gripe aside, the new look is great. Stuff is actually easier to read, there was a time when my eyes turned to jelly because of clashing colours. Red and green in particular, they used to vibrate in a strange hypnotic fashion when I was reading the yellow typeface. (I'm still looking for the epilepsy warning). The coverdisk was a great idea, some might think it's a little biased for a multi-format mag. I don't even own a Saturn, but it's the kind of promotion that will boost your mag even higher. So if any one moans about it, shut up! You're not payin' any extra for it!
Yours,

Dylan Wynne, North Wales

Nick: What a confused young man, full of contradictions. I appreciate he likes the look, cheers, but multi-format? What? Yeah, we decided to lay off the Nintendo reviews for a few years.
Ste: I think he means we cover Megadrive stuff as well, Braniac.
Gus: Braniac?
Ste: It's Brainiac.
Gus: Some of our old pages were appalling. I remember an issue a few years back when they had no more tips so they just filled half a page with a screenshot of Master System Rampage. Not pretty. I think the B&W works quite well, and you were obviously able to appreciate Natasha's pic as it was.

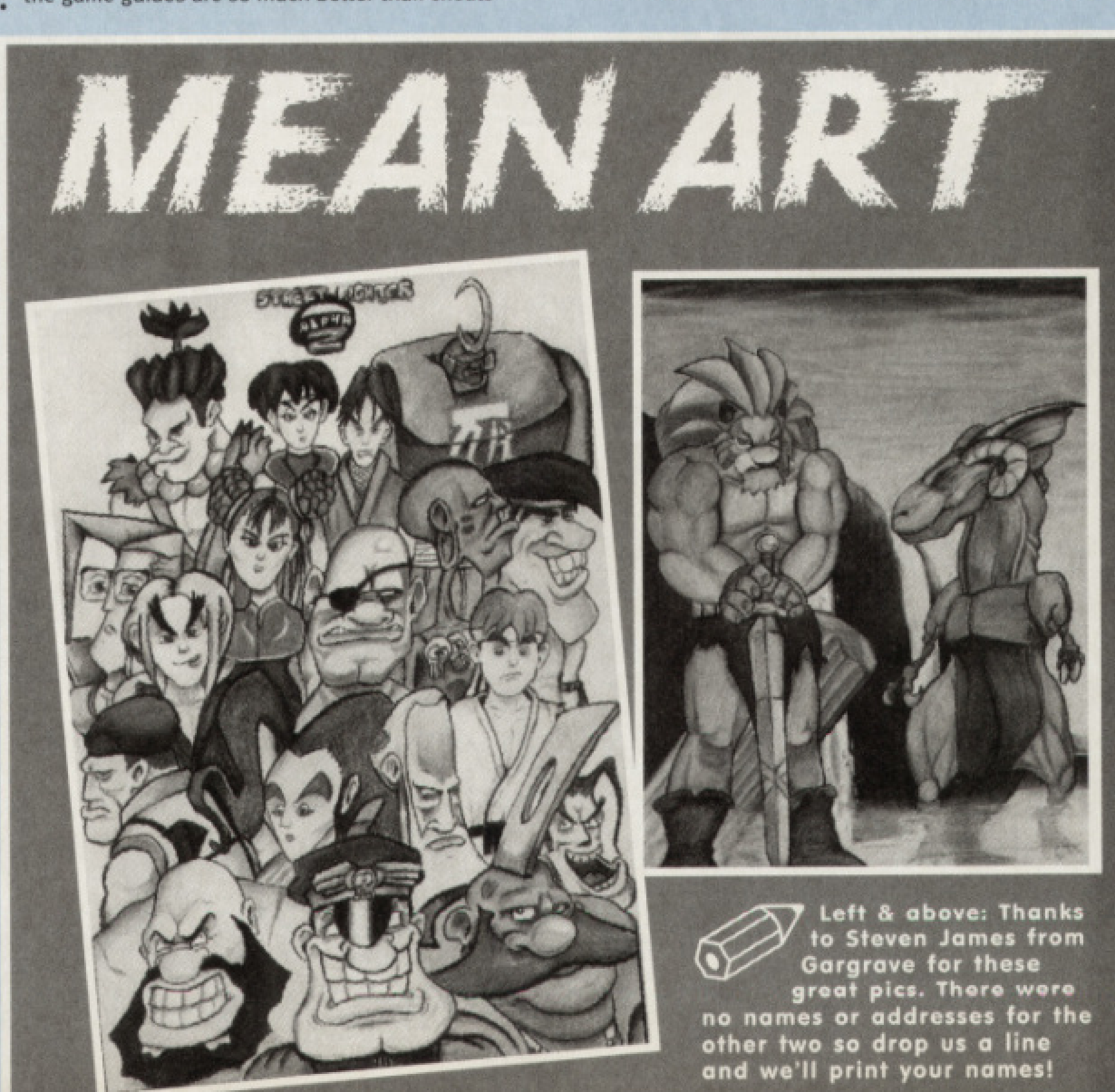
I'VE BEEN TO COLLEGE SO I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT

Dear Mean Mail,
I thought I'd take up on your request for comments on the "new look" mag. I'm 25, so I'm quite old, I have a degree in Graphic Design and I think that you've now got the magazine spot-on. Obviously the increasing graphical quality of the software helps the visuals in the mag, but it's great the way you can read it all the way through, or skip to the bits you want to, and it still makes a great read for us olds and kids alike. The reviews are by far the most reliable of any magazine. You let us know how good a game really is, and by previewing it for a while we get time to save up our cash. I always buy games which you rate over 90% and have never been disappointed.
My latest purchase on your approval is Tomb Raider and it's magic. Thanks to your demo disk and comprehensive review I now own the best game I have ever seen. I get home from work in the evening, play it for an hour, see the girlfriend for a couple of hours and then get back to spend the rest of the night with Lara Croft in the Lost Valley. I keep replaying that just to relive the sheer contentment you get when you kill the T-Rex. If only I knew what to do with the machine cogs! Back to the mag. It's easy to find what you want to read on the contents page, no extra charge for the CD, Mean 16 is excellent, especially the directory, and the game guides are so much better than cheats which destroy all the challenges a game presents. So please say a big "well done" to the team from me.
Yours,

Pierre DuPont, Salisbury

Gus: Well done, team.
Matt: He needs to get his priorities right as his social life goes: ditch the bitch and spend more time with Lara.
Nick: Two hours? Cut it down to about three minutes.
Gus: That's all the time you need Nick, isn't it?
Nick: No one is going to understand that.
Matt: But we do, don't we.
Nick: That's because you're a pervert.
Gus: Listen, we've been paid a compliment here, we should at least address the letter.
Jason: No let's just talk rubbish.
Nick: That's all we're good at.
Matt: Well, not all we're good at but this is a family mag after all so none of that smut Nick.

MEAN ART



Left & above: Thanks to Steven James from Gargrave for these great pics. There were no names or addresses for the other two so drop us a line and we'll print your names!

THE SATURN IS THE BESTEST THING EVER, EVER!

BEST LETTER

Dear Mean Mail,

Why is everyone buying a PlayStation or a (yawn) N64? When Sega have released their best console ever, the Sega Saturn!! PSX and N64 games may look good but the Saturn games are excellent. Take Crash Bandicoot, Mario 64 and NiGHTS. Crash may look like a good platform game, but how long does it last? Mario 64 has great graphics but as they say 'all graphics, no gameplay'! NiGHTS though beats Crash and Mazza without a fight! It may not take long to finish, but NiGHTS isn't about going from start to finish, it's about scoring lots of points! That's where the lastability and playability comes in! I was going to buy a PlayStation but, thankfully Gremlin released the excellent footy game Euro '96. Thanks Gremlin! So if you are thinking about buying a PS, N64 or SS you have to have a Sega Saturn. You won't regret it! Remember, SEGA rules! Also thanks to you lot for the free demo CD on issue 50. Any more demos planned? I love the sexy new look off MMS, keep it up!
Yours,

Andrew Clarkson, Goole

Nick: Thanks mate. But as far as the Saturn being the best thing ever — check your body mate, there are better pleasures!
Ste: I have to say Mario does have a lot of gameplay in there.
Gus: Yeah, but I've resisted the temptation to buy an N64 so far. I just don't need it. When will you get a gun game like V Cop 2 on N64? Not for ages.
Matt: Crash B is truly appalling, and I'm speaking as someone who has a PlayStation and Saturn.
Gus: Demos — there should be more after Christmas.

RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

Dear Mean Mail,

Cool mag! Keep up the good work. One thing though. Please stop putting coupons on the other side of an article. Put them somewhere where it's not important on the other side of the page, like Gus' face. If this note is printed, my hamster will bite Matt's B*@LL**S off! HA! Joke! Print it or your dead.
Cheers,

Tom Weston, Leicester

Matt: That's not very nice. Quite offensive.
Nick: Tell him we drink in the Pride, he knows where to find us.
Ste: We know where you live.
Jason: Your mother's a hamster and your father smells of elderberries!
Gus: Yeah, but we printed the letter so it doesn't matter.

NOW IT'S PERSONAL

Dear Gus

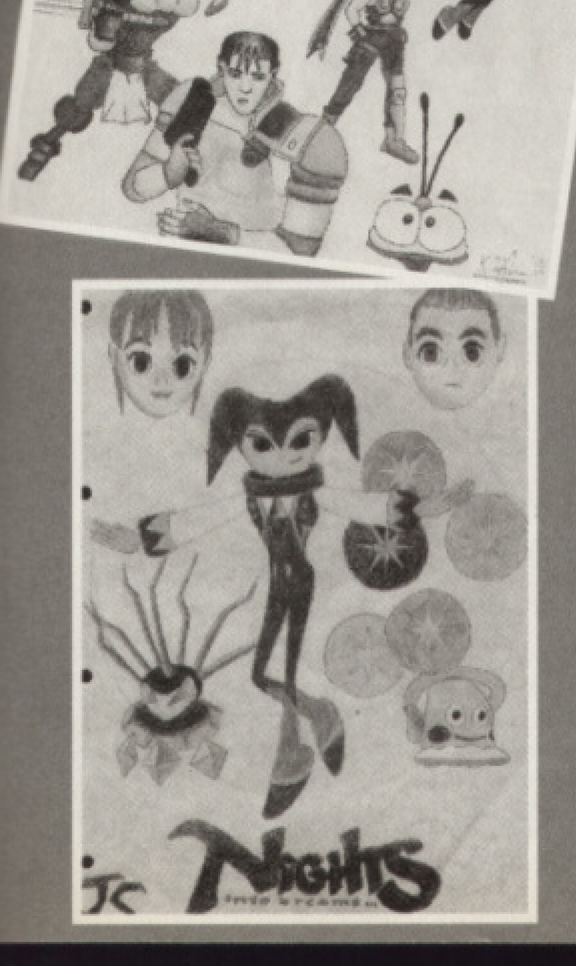
This IS a PiCTuRe of yoU WheN you 'R' 96 yeaRs old. (insert comedy pic of Gus here) WHat? You acTualy Like "Oh Docter Beaching"? ITS KRAP (insert comedy pic of a turd here) After watching Once I woz vomiting BLOOD. (insert comedy pic of stick figure vomiting blood here) Bi the way, Marcus looKs JUST like one of my mates at school (James Pike) I thought he might be related in SOME WAY. Don't you think Louise (ex-Eternal) is FIT? I do. (insert badly drawn pic of generic nudey lass here) Are you the same persoN who does GAMESMASTER on telly or just a very good looKalike?

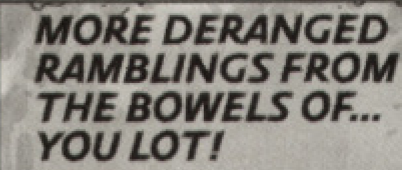
FROM **DaviD BurKInShaw**, somewhere in ENGlanD.

Nick: Yeah, Louise is fit, you're fick.
Gus: Let's Have a debate on Eternal. Personally, I think they suck.
Ste: There is no debate.
Nick: They definitely suck. Tee, hee.

SANDRA BOLLOCKS AGAIN

Once again, trapped in the Net. Me bunion's been giving me gyp and so has Gus' E-mail. He'd just like to say no thanks to the useless U-Net service provider who sent him the wrong software, never answered any of his calls to the service dept. etc. But I assure you Steve's is working. So mail us on: **Steveo@Otaku.com.**





MORE DERANGED RAMBLINGS FROM THE BOWELS OF... YOU LOT!

..or I'll beat the crap out of ya! That should take a few days (because you have so much crap)....

YOB: And where do you think all that crap comes from? That's right! You lot send it in every month. Keep up the good work.

Seal, from NMS, says he can take you anyday.

Matthew Bullman, Castleford

YOB: We sat down and talked about it. But then Seal spilled my pint, so I just had to teach him some respect, see. He's having the stitches out next week.

Do you know that Sega Power read your mag? Do you read their mag?

Matthew Bullman, Castleford (again)

YOB: Have you nothing better to do than write in twice in one month? Is it half term or something? Regarding our friends in Bath, I'm sure they enjoy looking at our pretty pictures at least.

Please can you send me all the moves to....

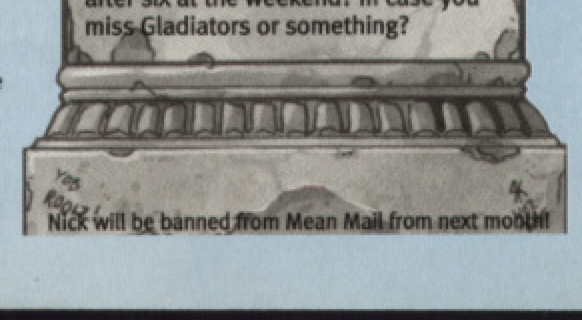
Peter Walker, Stoke on Trent

YOB: No we can't. Why? Well because, er... because we haven't got any stamps. Okay?

If you would like to know the cheat phone or write before the end of the month, Monday-Friday after 5pm, Sat-Sun 6-9pm. If you don't phone or write I shall try another mag.

Neil Wilson, Dumfries.

YOB: Okay, try another mag, see if I care. Why do we have to wait until after six at the weekend? In case you miss Gladiators or something?



Q&A

Not everything in black and white makes sense, but these answers do. We get our information direct from Sega. Well, direct from Mark who does his best. So you can stake money on them being categorically, totally er... mostly correct. Feel free to interact with me by posting your demands to "Uri Geller Commands You To Open This Now!", Q & A, MEAN MACHINES SEGA, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

'A THING OF BEAUTY IS A JOY 'TIL MORNING'

Dear Gus,

Please answer my questions about the Saturn and other things:
1. Are Sega making a 64 bit console? Will it be called Eclipse?
2. Are there any more 32X games due this year?
3. How come that the PlayStation has plenty of very good games and the Saturn has poor games such as Street Fighter: The Movie, Hang On GP and Wing Arms?
I hope Sega make fantastic games on the Saturn this year.
4. Is Mario 64 coming on the Saturn or is it just gossip?
5. When will Streets of Rage or another beat-'em-up game appear on the Saturn?
6. Are there any plans for making a conversion of Killer Instinct 2 on the Saturn?
7. When is Eternal Champions coming out on the Saturn?

Edwin Vercauteren, Belgium

GUS:1. Good start. That one came came straight out of a lucky bag. No. 2. No. 3. There are tons of crap PSX games including Street Fighter:The Movie and Cheesy the Mouse. 4. There is no gossip of that nature circulating, except perhaps in Arkham Asylum. 5. Core's Should-have-been-Streets-of-Rage-3 fighting game is due March, as is Sega's Die Hard Arcade. 6. None, and thankee the lord for that. 7. The success of Virtua Fighter put an end to that load of nonsense.

'MR CHURCHILL, YOU ARE INEBRIATED!'

Dear Gus,

As I have enclosed the Cream of Sega list with this letter, the least you can do is answer my simple questions.
1. As I like Capcom's 3 should I get all three?
2. Is Ultimate MK3 worth getting if I already own MK3 on the Megadrive?
3. Please put these games in order starting which is the best: Virtua Cop; Wipeout; Discworld, BUG!; X-Men: COTA and Destruction Derby.
4. I'd like to complain, you gave Toy Story on the Megadrive a rating of 92% but it's total crap, and Theme Park was also highly rated even though it's just as crap, so why give crap games good marks?
5. Why is your magazine so good?
Keep up the good work,

David Jones, Denbighshire

GUS: Thank you for your Cream of Sega list. 1. Beat-'em-up fans are entitled to get what they want, but there's a huge diversity of other titles. 2. I'd say yes. 3. Virtua Cop; Wipeout; BUG!; X-Men (the PAL version suffers from slowdown); Discworld; Destruction Derby. 4. Just about everyone else thinks Toy Story is brilliant, but it is first and foremost an example of excellent programming rather than amazing gameplay. I disagree with you about Theme Park. 5. We put a lot of time and effort into it, we care about games.

'MADAM, THAT MAY BE'

Last month's free demo CD went down a storm. Keep an eye out for more in '97

Dear Gus,

My Dad has just bought me a Saturn for Christmas (don't deny it Dad I know you have) and I was wondering:
1.The demo CD I got with the Saturn, is it made up of playable demos or not?
2. I was thinking of getting Doom, is it worth it?
3. If so do you think it is worth getting it in Gameplay?
4. For my second game I was thinking of getting Project Overkill or Loaded. Which is better?
5. Are there any games you think I should get instead?
6. Would I lose any quality using an RF unit?
From the one and only,

Peter Stanworth, Clitheroe.

GUS:1. If you have Flash Saturn 2, or Bootleg sampler, yes the demos are playable. 2. This we have yet to ascertain at time of writing. 3. Sorry? 4. Well, Loaded is out, and PO is not even on the horizon, but PO seems to be a more sophisticated game. 5. Exhumed: I think you would love it. 6. You get the best picture with an RGB connection through a stereo television.

'BUT IN THE MORNING I'LL BE SOBER'

Dear Gus,

I have a few questions for you,
1. Who is your favourite character out of VF2?



Fighting Vipers has more bells and whistles.

2. How do you kill the level 3 boss on PD2?
3. How much is Doom going to cost?
4. And what about Hexen?
5. Which is better VF2 or Fighting Vipers?
P.S. In issue 49 you answered Peter Helts questions that it was me writing under a false name because I didn't want my friend to find out I have got a Saturn.

Paul Hays, Northampton

GUS:1. I do tend to play with Lion a lot, though I love Pai's gracefulness. 2. You must track the monster as he circles you, using the hand laser to destroy the red blobs. When you have a powered berserk weapon, unleash it as he swings through the trees. 3. £44.99. 4. The same. 5. This is a complex subject. Most people would say VF2 looks better, as the graphics are of a higher resolution, but Fighting Vipers is doing more technically, and has more dynamic camera tracking. FV is more accessible to casual players, as the special moves are easier to perform and look sensational. But VF2 has to remain the connoisseurs' choice. It's a work of game art.

'WHEREAS YOU WILL STILL BE UGLY'

Dear Gus at Q+A

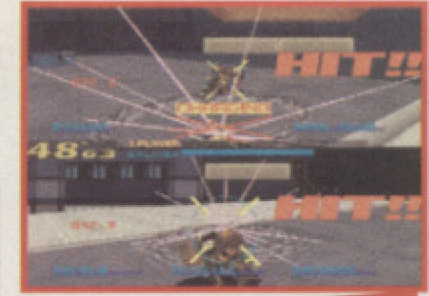
1. Any chance of Psygnosis converting F1 or Novastorm from PlayStation to Saturn?
2. Who's the cutest Bub or Bob?
3. When will Sonic 3D be released on the Megadrive?
4. When is the Saturn version due?
5. Will Daytona CCE be better than Sega Rally?
6. I'm hoping to get a Saturn in the not too distant future. Which game should I buy?
7. I loved the free Saturn music CD. Any chance of another?
Thank you very much Gus.

Ben Willbery, Oxford.

GUS: 1. F1 perhaps, but Novastorm is now too old (it's also crap). 2. I haven't noticed to tell you the truth. 3. It is out now. 4. Late February, I hear. 5. Er... It's not. 6. You should get a pack with either Cop, Rally or VF2 as these are excellent value. Look through our directory for the best games within the genres. 7. It was a personal project of mine to produce the CD — we mastered it upstairs using a Pentium linked up to a Saturn and a cheap disc-cutter! Since then, there has been so much excellent Sega music that I'd love to do another, but maybe we'll look in to doing it commercially through a music publisher. If you readers want another music CD, give me some backing by writing in and demanding one.

7-ZARK-7

Virtual On could be loosely termed a beat-'em-up or shoot-'em-up but the truth is that it combines elements of both. It has overtones of the ancient Atari game Combat in that you aim your tank, or mech, at your opponent and then open fire before running for cover. The robots fight in an enclosed arena, and each stage has a different arrangement of buildings which you can shelter behind or, if you're feeling brave, stand on top of. Each mech has three weapons of varying destructiveness, but they must be charged-up before firing so you can't just keep pounding the trigger like crazy. It is also quite easy to lose sight of your opponent while you are running around, so if you jump you are automatically aligned to face them. Handy hint: Some weapons also have a slightly different effect if unleashed in the air.

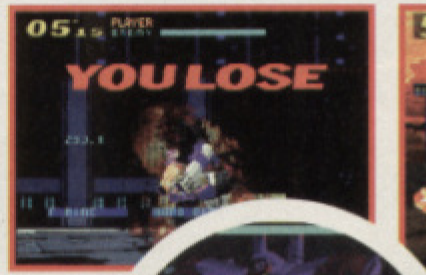






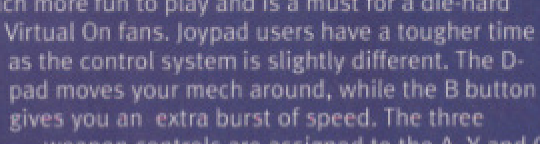








OPTIMUS PRIME



The arcade machine uses a control system that is original, to say the least. Players use twin joysticks which allow mechs to pull off various manoeuvres. Push both sticks in the same direction to run that way. Push one stick forwards and the other left or right to turn, one stick pushed forwards and the other pulled back makes your mech turn faster. Pull the sticks apart to jump and push them together to block. The fire buttons on each stick trigger the standard weapons; both buttons at once charge the special attack or, if your opponent is in range, activate your mech's close combat moves. To replicate this control method in the home, Sega of Japan is releasing the Twin Stick peripheral with the game. There's no word yet on whether the peripheral will be available over here, but chances are it will be expensive. It makes the game much more fun to play and is a must for a die-hard Virtual On fans. Joypad users have a tougher time as the control system is slightly different. The D-pad moves your mech around, while the B button gives you an extra burst of speed. The three weapon controls are assigned to the A, Y and C buttons, X or Z handles jumping and the L and R buttons spin your 'bot on the spot.



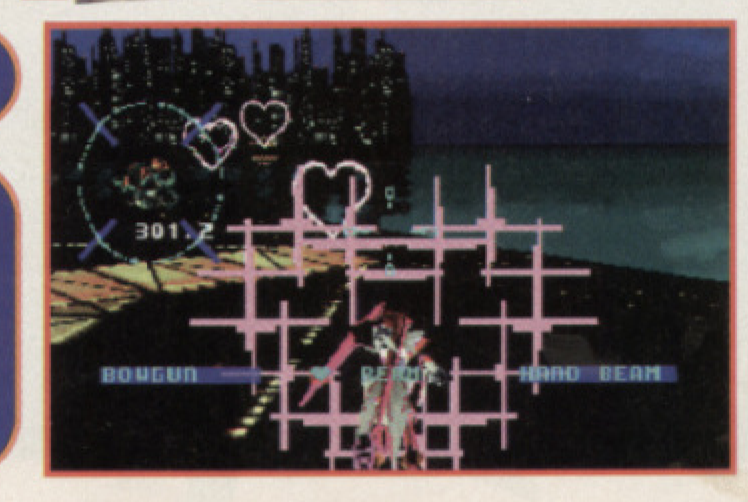






MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM

Although each mech has different weapons, they all have one in each of three categories; projectile, explosive and special. The projectile weapons take the form of such standard devices as shotguns or lasers. In the explosive category you'll find armaments such as grenades and homing mines. The special weapons are where the really over-the-top effects come in as spinning disks of energy and massive laser bolts are employed to trash your opponent. In addition the Virtuaroids are also capable of close combat. Get within a certain range of the other player and you can lay into them with light saber-style energy swords, maces or whatever else your battle-bot is armed with.



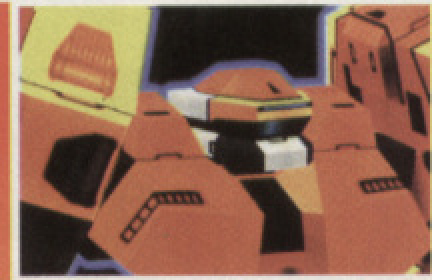
Huge robots? Check. Big guns? Check. It's Virtual On!



GUGES-D

Each of the eight Virtuaroids in Virtual On has unique weapons and abilities. Here's the essential info on each of them...









V.R. TEMJIN

Temjin is Mr. Average amongst the Virtuaroids, being endowed with medium amounts of speed, armour and weaponry. He also forms the basis for most of the other mecha.

WEAPONS
BEAM RIFLE: Fires bolts of blue energy that home in on your opponent.
BOMB: Temjin lobs a grenade that explodes on contact. This weapon doesn't have a brilliant range.
BEAM SWORD: An energy bolt is launched towards your foe.

V.R. DORKAS

A squat, powerful droid with a useful turn of speed. Dorkas is also armed with a huge spiked hammer for close combat. However his long-distance weapons are a bit naff.

WEAPONS
FIREBALL: A barrage of flaming cheesy puff balls are unleashed upon your hapless enemy.
HAMMER: Crunch your opponent into submission as Dorkas lobs his hammer head at them.
PHALANX: Dorkas launches two columns of mines which explode either side of your opponent.

V.R. BELGDOR

Another chunky borg, Despite his larger size Belgdor is nevertheless fairly nimble. He also comes in an attractive military green hue which blends in with darker backdrops.

WEAPONS
GRENADE: Belgdor fires rapid explosive projectiles at his enemies.
NAPALM: Like a single stream of Dorkas' Phalanx weapon, this sends a series of explosions towards your opponent.
MISSILE: Two homing missiles that sap loads of energy.

V.R. FEI YEN

The 'female' robot, so she is obviously the fastest and weakest. However, once half her energy has gone, her attacks cause double damage!

WEAPONS
HANDBEAM: Bog standard rapid firing pink energy bolts. Useful in hit-and-run attacks.
BOWGUN: Fei Yen fires pink arrow projectiles from her sword. Cause multiple hits.
HEART BEAM: Fei Yen powers up for a second then launches a stream of hearts at her opponent.







V.R. VIPER II

Viper is similar to Temjin but is lighter and therefore faster. He also has the best weaponry.

WEAPONS
VULCAN: A stream of blue energy-based death is directed at your opponent.
7 WAY MISSILE: Seven, yes seven, projectiles are launched at once, but they don't home in so not all will impact.
HOMING BEAM: A blue bolt of energy that tracks down enemies. Causes loads of damage.

V.R. BAL BAS BOW

Uses a levitation system to move around. Not really much cop but does have some quirky weapons.

WEAPONS
RING LASER: Circular bolts of energy, basically. Causes many hits if timed correctly.
FLOATING MINE: A hovering mine device which floats towards your opponent and then explodes inflicting plenty of damage.
HAND BIT: Bal Bas Bow's hands fly off and act as remote cannons. A sneaky weapon to use.

V.R. APHARMD

A faster Temjin with an excellent close combat weapon. His arsenal is quite hard to aim though.

WEAPONS
SHOTGUN: Fires shotgun cartridges. Pink ones at that. Well what did you expect?
BOMB: Apharmd lobs an explosive grenade with effects similar to Temjin's.
TONGFER: He dashes forwards and fires a huge bolt of energy from his close combat cannon device.

V.R. RAIDEN

The most heavily armoured but slowest of the Virtuaroids. Also possesses the most powerful gun.

WEAPONS
BAZOOKA: A very powerful projectile weapon. Deadly when powered up.
GROUND BOMB: A floor hugging mine that explodes on contact with buildings or mechs.
LASER: The biggest, baddest weapon. Two massive laser bolts that can halve your opponent's energy. At least.



SUPER DIMENSIONAL FORTRESS MACROSS

In the arcades, Virtual On is very much a two player game. Indeed it's only available as a two player linked cabinet, which is why it is fairly rare in this country – the cost of having two Model 2 boards in a relatively low grossing game is prohibitive to most arcade owners. But still, it would have been a bit of an own goal for Sega not to include a two player game in the Saturn conversion. Fortunately then, there are two modes. In Versus Mode you can choose between a horizontal and vertical split-screen. This may not appear to make much of a difference, but it does have an effect on how you play the game. With the horizontal split it's easier to see what is going on either side of you, whereas with the vertical split you get a better view when you're in the air. So choose the split-screen mode that concurs with your own playing style and sod your mates! The best news though is that Virtual On is also fully Netlink compatible so players all over the globe will be able to challenge each other, once Sega finally gets round to releasing the required Saturn hardware that is. Since that peripheral is out in Japan already, they're no doubt getting up to all sorts of multi-player shenanigans even as I type this! Lucky wotsits.







comment



STEVE

As they say about records, this one's a bit of a grower. Although anything with big Japanese style mecha is fine by me, I was initially wary of Virtual On due to my complete inability to play it. But with practice, with lots of practice, I found I was able to pull-off all kinds of outlandish moves and generally decimate the opposition with the best of them. I'm not really in a position to comment on the closeness of the conversion, having not had too much experience with the arcade game, but I can tell you that the Saturn version looks fantastic anyway. The 'net curtain' effect does creep in on some of the larger explosions, but the mechs are distinctive and well-detailed. The music is good, if a little too up-lifting for such a violent, action-packed game, and the sound effects complement that anime feel perfectly. My only reservation about Virtual On is that many gamers may initially find it a bit inaccessible but stick with it and you'll find Sega's latest arcade conversion is in fact a cracking piece of software.

comment

MATT

I actually steered well clear of Virtual On in the arcades when it was first released but have since grown to appreciate what a challenging and strategic game it really is. AM3 have shown that you don't need Yu Suzuki on your team to develop a classic Sega coin-op and their long-awaited home conversion certainly bodes well for future Saturn titles. Virtual On's main selling point is surely its unique two-player mode and even without the Twin Stick peripherals players will soon master the unfamiliar control set-up as they race around 3D arenas attempting to reduce each other to scrap metal. The attention to detail is staggering (check out the mini Saturns attached to each robots back!) and even though the game only runs at 30fps, you'll still be surprised at the speed and fluidity of each battle. If you're looking for a slightly unique game that'll offer hours of one-on-one explosive action then Virtual On definitely gets my seal of approval.





scores

GRAPHICS — Obviously not as complex as the arcade game, but the Saturn handles the Manga-style robots remarkably well. Some of the explosions suffer from the familiar net curtain effect and the horizontal split-screen mode can get confusing at times. **93**

SOUND — Meaty weapon and explosion effects plus top quality in-game music. The tunes are typical Sega fare which you'll either love or hate. Satisfying robotic speech sampled straight from the arcade board. **89**

PLAYABILITY — Criminy! It's a bit confusing and no mistake. The combination of interesting controls and fast-paced action mean you'll probably spend a while losing battles. After that, AM2's classic playability shines through. **90**

LASTABILITY — Virtual On really is a two player game, so once you and a mate reach equal levels of skill endless fun looms. On your own it isn't quite so much fun but there is a Ranking mode to keep you occupied. **93**

overall

Bit of a strange one this. What it does it does very well, but it won't be everyone's cup of tea. If you're intrigued by the big robot action then Virtual On comes highly recommended.

92

review

Game Name	Command & Conquer		
Publisher	Virgin		
Release	December	Price	£44.99
Game Style	Strategy		
Import?	✗	Linkplay? ✗	Players 1
Control	Joypad		
Background	Direct conversion of Westwood Studios PC hit of 1995.		

Mankind's first and ultimate game has always been warfare, where the risks are highest and the rewards greatest.

The strategy game started out as the abstract embodiment of the wars and conflicts of man, where the battle is fought in the mind; the positioning of forces, the use of resources, the tactics of advantage. The earliest and longest-surviving games of civilisation, like Chess, are simplified battlegrounds, where the horror of the field is removed and the purity of intellect remains.

Command and Conquer (C&C) is the latest updating of the wargame, and one where the element of horror (mixed with comedy) returns, as battles unfold in miniature. It would probably be endorsed by some of the maniacs who have played similar games throughout history using real people as their 'pieces'.







NOD ALLIANCE BREAKDOWN



THE GREAT DIVIDE

...he near future split into two idealogical factions, allowing you to play either side in a battle for supremacy over global territories. The GDI could be aligned with the democratic alliances we know like NATO, and the Brotherhood of NOD is a shadowy mix of totalitarian and terrorist ideals, the traditional bogeymen of the Western world. Each 'round' is selected from a digitised political map, and played out on a scrolling battlefield, with the objective varying each time.



Note the dual power stations in this base. The better buildings require additional power or work at reduced efficiency.



PLAYING WITH PAWNS

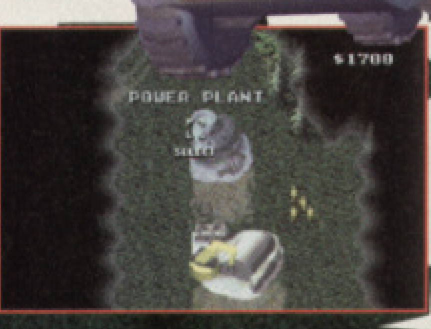
The mainstay of your forces are the infantry, who must ultimately overwhelm the enemy. Most of these, the gunners, grenadiers and mortar bearers are out in the field, but some man your installations, churning out weapons and vehicles for the war effort. You can move units individually, or en masse, by dragging a box around your troops and simply clicking the point you want them to move to. They will defend themselves automatically against hostile fire, or another unit if you designate it with the 'guard' directive or advance to attack a target without hesitation if you command it. The game can handle a large amount of units in action on both sides at any one time.





THE WAR EFFORT

In the missions where you have a base, production is a key element to victory. You channel your financial resources into creating men and machines to send into battle. Disabling your opponent's facilities will help you overcome them. The heart of your base is a MCV or Mobile Command Vehicle. Where this is deployed, you have a construction site that can create other buildings. Your first construction should be the other essential — a power plant.



The construction yard is the heart of any long operation. Lose it and you can't create any more buildings. By the same token, it's the ultimate focus of your attack

MASS CARNAGE

Each unit has a small bar denoting its 'health' status, from green through to red. Once the bar has gone, the unit dies (an event that doesn't pass you by). Buildings have status to, but these can be repaired, if resources allow.



COMMAND & CONQUER



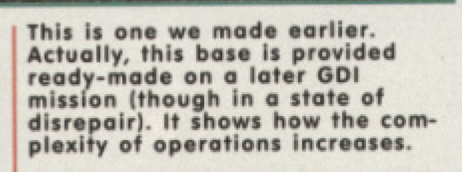


Some corner of a foreign field that is forever England...





This is one we made earlier. Actually, this base is provided ready-made on a later GDI mission (though in a state of disrepair). It shows how the complexity of operations increases.



REAP WHAT YOU SOW

Tiberium is the key commodity of C&C. This valuable crystal grows in fields which can be harvested and refined by a specific process. You must build refineries and send harvesters to nearby Tiberium deposits, converting the harvest into cash. These sites often become the focus of skirmishes, as destroying your enemies' harvesters is a direct way of cutting his resources. Unfortunately, Tiberium is a noxious substance, and the fields are dangerous places for men.





COMMAND STRUCTURE

As C&C plays in realtime, the system of issuing commands has to be fast. Fortunately an icon-driven menu bar has been developed for this. Each vertical area of the bar handles a different area of production; buildings, men, vehicles, and each horizontal space a different type. As the game progresses, a larger range of options appears. There are additional speech cues informing you of your status when your attention may be elsewhere.







INFILTRATION

The role of the engineer is a specific one. They have no weapons, but are able to take command of enemy installations by entering them. Depending on the building, they can then turn its production against its former owner. There is an added bonus in that both sides produce different types of forces, and an infiltrated resource can produce opponent force types allied to you. Engineers are expensive to 'produce' but can change the course of a conflict when used effectively. The challenge is to get them close enough to do their stuff.



SPECIAL FORCES

Unlike Dune 2: Battle for Arrakis (also made by Westwood Studios and the basis of C&C in many ways) all the missions do not revolve around established bases. There are transit missions where you have finite forces made to cross an area of hostile terrain, seize a consignment or destroy specific sites. An early example is the Commando mission, where you have a single, super-skilled special forces operative who takes on a whole battalion. Despite the variety these offer, they can sometimes frustrate players wanting to get their hands on the game's full bag of tricks.



NON-ALIGNED

C&C does not automatically cast you in the role of the good guy. The game comes on two separate discs specifically to let you play in two distinct theatres, Europe and Africa; one as GDI, the other as NOD. The way your career progresses, shown by dozens of interlinking FMV and CG clips, depends on the side you opt to support.

GALLOWS HUMOUR

C&C is sick to some, which is understandable in the graphic way it treats the subject. Though the characters are miniature, you can clearly see the dying fall and writhe, or explode in a mass of body parts. There is a seemingly endless variety of sampled screams, groans and cries; and when bodies are run over by vehicles; squelches.



scores

GRAPHICS Undeniably simplistic, with tiny sprites and bland battlefields, but these relate to the game's functions perfectly, and the amount of action handled on screen is impressive. Fascinating to watch. **83**

SOUND The style of music during missions is not completely suited to the game. Players will get more enjoyment from hearing the samples given to the men under their command and the excellent battle FX. **81**

PLAYABILITY The step-by-step introductory levels allow novices to get into C&C without being bewildered by the range of options. It quickly becomes a compulsive and time-consuming game. **90**

LASTABILITY There are dozens of missions, some of which are quite frustrating, offering weeks of play as either side. However the lack of the anticipated dual player option is a slight blow. **92**

overall

The first, and really the only, pure strategy game for Saturn, and a superb one at that. A faithful conversion retaining the speed and essence of the original. **90**

comment

GUS

Why this was the most successful PC CD-ROM game of last year, is not hard to work out. It's a hugely absorbing game, and a technically superb one, despite the misleadingly 'poor' graphics. As a Saturn conversion it's stunning, with speed to match a higher than average-specced Pentium. The nature of the gameplay will hook anyone with an interest in strategy RPGs (like Mystaria) or board games, but the realtime element is very strong, and battles can be lost in seconds, as a heavy tank trundles over twenty of your freshest men. On most levels, the tussles can last for hours demanding your total attention, and the opportunity to refine tactics is nearly infinite. The only bad news is the lack of a multi-player option, even though Westwood had hoped to support a cable-link option, as committed C&Cers inevitably yearn for a worthy human opponent. Also, some early missions stray from the game's real strength, which is manipulating all the resources of a base, with pseudo arcade-style special ops missions that can become really irritating. That aside, this deserves to be a monster hit.

comment

MATT

The phrase "wargaming" usually conjures up nightmare visions of spotty youths moving badly painted metal miniatures around their dining room table, convinced they're living in some kind of bizarre Tolkien-tribute fantasy world. Thankfully, Command & Conquer restores my faith in classic strategy games by providing an atmospheric and challenging experience to be appreciated by Saturn owners. It's great to see so many top-rated PC titles are being ported over to consoles, and encouraging that Westwood Studios have boosted the speed and graphical detail of C&C. The twin disc set is also a winner and not only doubles the game's longevity but offers two separate and distinct challenges for aspiring megalomaniacs. Taking tactical advantage of both terrain and resources does require a certain level of skill but even players unfamiliar with this style of game will soon feel comfortable with C&C's straightforward menu-driven icon system. If you've always fancied yourself as the dictatorial type and love the thrill of wielding power of humble minions then Command & Conquer is ideal. The strange thing is, this has been Gus' favourite game this month. Hmm...







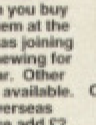





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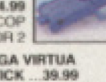
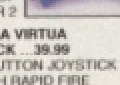
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review

Game Name	Madden NFL '97
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Release	Out Now
Price	£49.99
Game Style	Sports
Import?	✓
Linkplay?	✗
Players	1-8
Control	Joypad
Background	Latest in a series of classic EA American football games

He's big, he's bloated and he's back! Yes, the wait is finally over 'cos Madden '97 is about to touchdown on a Saturn near you.

With virtually every Megadrive Madden outing receiving whopping high scores, EA Sports knew that a next generation version would have to be something special. Fortunately for American football fans, the absence of a '96 update has actually worked in their favour, giving developer Tiberon Entertainment the time and opportunity to hone and refine the classic Madden gameplay formula. The result is an incredibly detailed and realistic sports sim allowing up to eight players to compete in some gripping play-off sessions and rookies to get to grips with the many in-game options. Madden NFL '97 sets the benchmark for American football games for at least the next 12 months. Game on!



Cor, isn't Madden '97s intro pretty smart?

Defensive plays can alter the outcome of any game.

MOVIE MADDEN-NESS

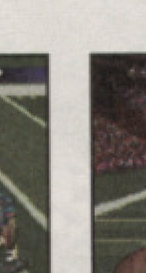
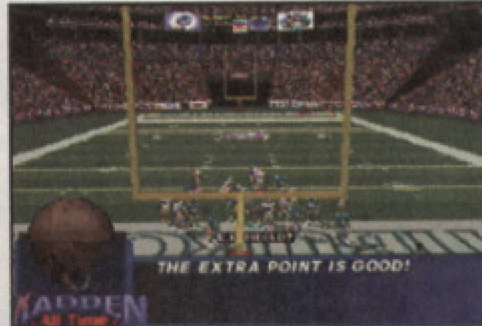
It's standard practice these days for 32 bit games to feature an obligatory rendered intro sequence. This long-winded piece of FMV usually sets the tone for the game yet Madden '97s dodgy film footage is one of the best laughs we've had in ages. The Madden-cam swoops over a 3D stadium as a game is in progress. Cue grown men grunting and sweating before old potato head himself appears in a blaze of glory. Is it just me or does John Madden bear an uncanny resemblance to the late, great 'King of Comedy', John Candy?

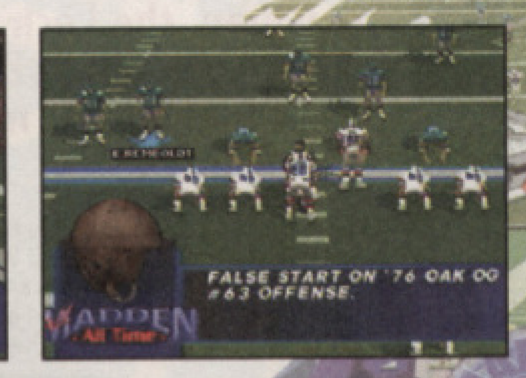
SMELLS LIKE TEAM SPIRIT

Dolphins, bears, broncos and panthers. What is this, a zoo? For those of you not familiar with the bizarre world of America's favourite sport, these names may sound strange but diehard footie fans will instantly recognise their helmeted heroes. EA Sports has included a complete, up-to-date NFL line-up which boasts every single professional team currently playing in the US. If you manage to win the Super Bowl even more teams become available including classic line-ups from the past (such as the '66 Green Bay Packers) and even a 1996 All-Madden Team!

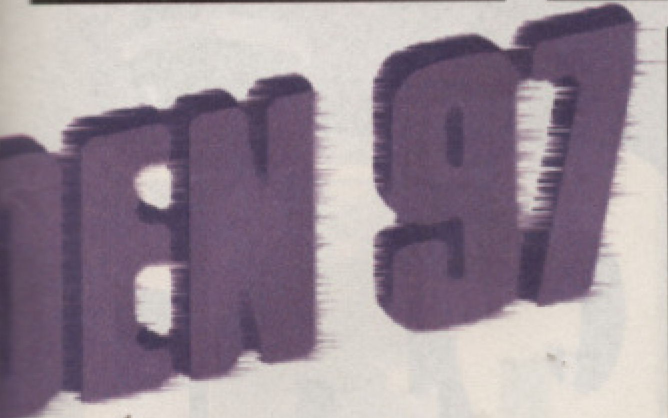
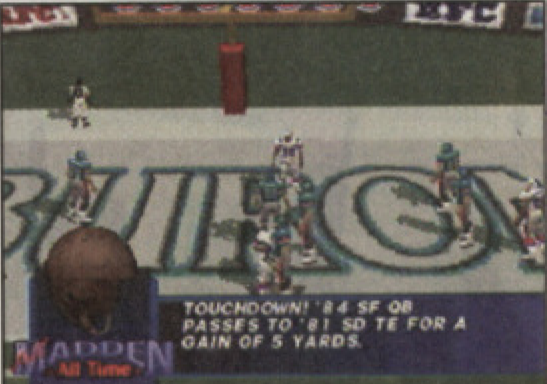
MENU MASTERS

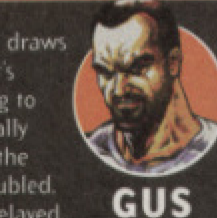
Pause the game at any point and players are presented with options galore. These handy charts provide information on play settings, team stats, command icons, Joypad functions and much more. The camera feature is especially useful, allowing players to view the game from a number of dramatic angles providing full coverage of the pitch and your teams performance.



DEN 97



comment

GUS

As this year draws to a close it's encouraging to see EA finally releasing the much troubled, and oft delayed, Madden NFL '97. If sports crazy Saturn owners thought their Christmas holidays would be spent stuffing themselves full of turkey, watching yet another Only Fools and Horses repeat, and having to wear that embarrassing sweater their Auntie Beryl gave them, then think again. With no '96 update to keep fans of the series busy, EA has spent extra development time tweaking the game's engine, the results of which are evident from the slick intro sequence and smooth FMV to a wealth of stats and incredibly accurate gameplay. Novice players are catered for with a straightforward menu system whilst experienced pigskin pummellers will be able to leap into the thick of things and smash their way through to the Super Bowl. If you're looking for a realistic sports sim packed with bone crunching action, Madden NFL '97 is the gridiron king.

comment

MATT

Well, the Madden series has finally made the jump to the Saturn complete with all the shiny dangly bits present in the Megadrive game. Although I could never see the point in staying up until 3.00 in the morning to watch the actual Superbowl, I must confess that Madden '92 used to keep me occupied for many an hour so I'm happy to see that the new 32 bit version returns to the dizzying heights of the series' earlier incarnations. EA's Virtual Stadium technology gives each team their own distinctive ball park (or is that baseball? I'm never quite sure) and the roving, panning camera angles lend a real TV style feel to the game. Of course no American football game would be complete without a mind-blowing array of set plays to guide your team, and Madden NFL '97 is no exception. Despite looking like a load of squiggles and some dots, these plays do add a deeper tactical meaning to the game. Madden is great, long live the bloated one!

scores

GRAPHICS Detailed digitised players, texture mapped 3D stadiums and slick presentation. However, some jerky frames of animation let down the smooth in-game visuals. **88**

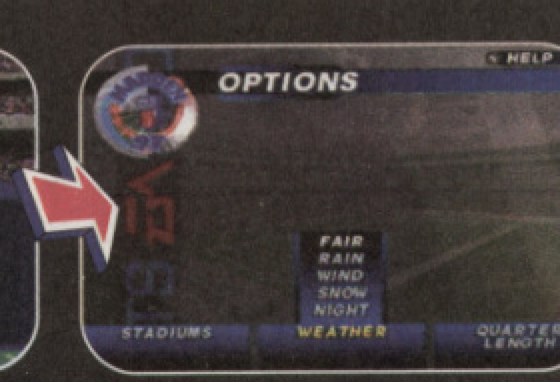
SOUND Realistic crowd noises, grunting players and the ear-bleeding drawl of Mr Madden himself. Sound effects make you realise just how painful American football really is! **92**

PLAYABILITY Classic Madden gameplay that's accessible to both newcomers and seasoned veterans alike. On-screen menus make complicated plays and tricky Joypad controls a thing of the past. **93**

LASTABILITY Complete the Super Bowl to access more goodies such as extra teams. Grab a few mates and a couple of Joypads for some real laughs in the excellent eight player mode. **92**

overall

Well worth waiting for. A solid American football game packed with a mind-boggling array of optional extras. **91**





review

Game Name	Mighty Hits
Publisher	Sega
Release	December — Price £29.99
Game Style	Shoot-'em-up
Import?	X — Linkplay? X — Players 1
Control	Joypad/Virtua Gun
Background	We have no idea what Sega is playing at here

Some things remain inexplicable; consider UFOs, the Abominable Snowman, the Loch Ness Monster, why people watch Blind Date. And now, consider the mystery that is Mighty Hits.

As far as we can ascertain, Mighty Hits is comprised of twenty gun-based sub-games tied to a surreal Wild West sort of scenario. Complete a set number of games and you receive a score based on your reflexes, timing, memory and accuracy. Sounds like the ultimate party game, right? Hmm... not quite.



PARLOUR GAMES

With twenty different challenges to try, it'll take a while to see everything in Mighty Hits. Some of the sub-games are very simple; for example shoot a bottle as its cap flies off. Others are rather tough; lob balls into cups on the backs of three rapidly rotating mice. A few are virtually impossible; three clock faces are swinging on pendulums and you have to nail all three at once, with just one bullet in your gun! This means a steady gun arm is required, but these stages can prove frustrating if you're after a decent score. The truth is that most of the sub-games require almost super human feats of accuracy.

INTRODUCING

Mighty Hits has one of the weirdest intros we've ever seen. A lone horseman heads across the open prairie on his turbo-charged steed, enters a bar in the midst of a hold-up, his head falls off, he shoots someone, they shoot back and the whole saloon collapses. What does it all mean?



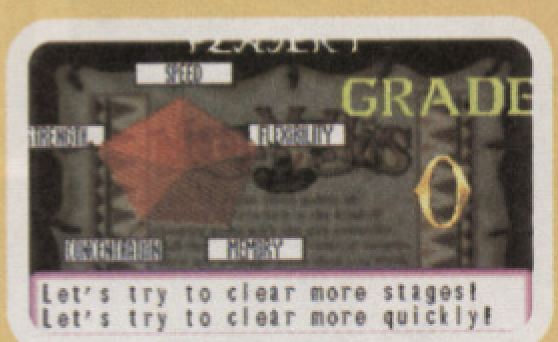


ROTARY SELECTOR

To choose which games to attempt, you are presented with three boards which rapidly flick through the available games. Shoot each board to stop it and so select your game. There is an element of chance here, as the games flip by so fast you can't always choose the stage you want. However, if you manage to clear three stages in a row, you get to play a bonus game which lets you select your next three stages manually if you win. If you lose then you'll get nowt, I'm afraid.

SCORES ON THE DOORS

At the end of each shoot out session, you're rated in five general areas; strength, speed, flexibility, memory and concentration. You are also awarded an overall grade somewhere between A and Z, but you'll need god-like reflexes to attain the higher grades. Even after extended play we could only reach grade O, as you can see. The rating screen also offers handy tips on how to improve your score and get a better grade.





comment

GUS

You wait for ages and then two gun games turn up at once. Mighty Hits is a rather jolly idea, and coupled with a decidedly odd Wild West setting you would think that it would be a right laugh. Sadly this is not the case, as although it's initially fun: Hits starts to drag very quickly and some of the games are so frustrating that you almost want to shoot your TV for real. Perhaps inevitably Mighty Hits doesn't stand a chance against the awesome Virtua Cop 2, and you'd be advised to spend your cash on that instead.



comment

MATT

With not one but two shoot em up titles receiving the review treatment this month, light gun owners might be fooled into thinking that they're actually going to get some use out of their trusty firearm at last. While this is certainly the case with Virtua Cop 2, the runt of the litter is sadly Mighty Hits. There's really very little to recommend about this loose collection of second rate sub games and Saturn owners will soon tire of the unexciting, repetitive gameplay. Is this really the standard of quality we expect from our 32 bit wonder machine? I don't think so.

scores

GRAPHICS A combination of polygon characters and rendered backgrounds provide a basic play environment. The surreal Wild West characters are amusing. For about five minutes. **72**

SOUND Inoffensive tunes tinker away in the background. The sound effects aren't exactly Earth-shattering either. The characters don't speak, which is either a blessing or a disappointment, depending on how you look at it. **68**

PLAYABILITY Dead simple to get into and the gameplay is novel, as long as you're using the gun that is: pad bound players won't get much fun out of it. The grading system offers an incentive to continue playing. **81**

LASTABILITY Initially fun, but after a while you just can't be bothered. Some of the time limits on the harder levels are almost impossible which frustrates. Unless you have a gun, Mighty Hits offers little long term enjoyment. **61**

overall

Mighty Hits is an interesting idea, but it doesn't make for a compelling game. For parties only, but then who wants to play games at a party? **62**



review

Game Name	Sega Ages
Publisher	Sega
Release	Out Now — Price £29.99
Game Style	Shooting/Driving
Import?	✕ — Linkplay? ✕ — Players 1
Control	Joypad
Background	Three classic arcade games on one disc.

Just think, without Outrun there'd never have been a Sega Rally. But maybe this retro-gaming thing is going a bit far. After the Darius debacle last month, you may have had just about enough of those old fangled crap graphics and sound.

"Ah yes", retro-fans will cry, "but it's that good old fashioned gameplay that really counts". Maybe, but given the choice between limp titles like Darius and the graphical splendour of Panzer Dragoon 2, we know which one we'd rather choose. However, cast your mind back ten years and what do you see? Super fast 3D graphics, gut-churning hydraulic cabinets AND top quality game play. Okay so maybe at the time you weren't tall enough to reach the buttons, but you can't deny that Outrun, Afterburner and Space Harrier are the grandparents of Sega's current arcade hits. And now, for the very first time, perfect home conversions of all three games are available on one Saturn disc!



AFTERBURNER



Current equivalent: Top Gun. Or Sky Target in the arcades.

Top Gun in all but name, the 1986 arcade hit put you in a lone fighter plane and pitted you against wave upon wave of enemy dog fighters and helicopters. You had machine guns and missiles to dispatch the enemy hordes, and the game also featured mid-air re-arming sequences. Later levels involved canyon runs and ground based targets. Another game with a hydraulic cabinet, nausea could be induced quite easily by repeatedly performing barrel rolls. This is the first time that an arcade perfect conversion has been feasible on a home system. The 32X game was close, but was missing a lot of the ground detail present and correct in the Saturn version.



SPACE HARRIER

Current equivalent: Panzer Dragoon Zwei

Dating from 1984, Space Harrier was the first coin-op to use Sega's revolutionary sprite scaling technology. At the time it had the same impact as Model 2 games have today and also boasted a hydraulic cabinet. The game is a direct ancestor of the Panzer Dragoon series, as you were limited to a fairly small path and had to destroy all and sundry in a fast 3D environment. However AM2 must have been taking some interesting substances at the time, as flying stone heads and mushrooms lead the assault on your player! The Saturn conversion is, like the rest of the pack, arcade perfect. This was one of the first games Steve ever played. Shame, he's just a nipper you know.









TO BE THIS GOOD TAKES AGES

This collection of games first appeared in the arcades over a decade ago but what were the fantastic Mean Machines team up to in 1986? Style-guru Gus was listening to A-Ha and training his Morton Harkett haircut, randy Dep Ed Matt confessed under interrogation that '86 was the year he lost his cherry, Nick was celebrating the start of his teenage years, and Steve? Well, he was nine and had to be home by seven o'clock. Still, his mum lets him 'play out' until nine these days.

OUTRUN

Current equivalent: Need for Speed (for the progressive structure), Sega Rally (for general coolness)

Released in 1987, Outrun is part of a long line of Sega driving games including Rad Mobile, Virtua Racing, Sega Rally and now Touring Car Championship. Again using a hydraulic cabinet, this time in the shape of a comedy Ferrari, Outrun has 15 stages combined into one big race across America. There's a choice of routes and it's non-stop action all the way. You can also play the Japanese mode, which has totally different stages!







comment

MATT

Arcade perfect retro game conversions seem to be all the rage this month what with the amazing Williams Arcade's Classic and even Sega getting in on the act. However, all this nostalgia has to be put into some sort of perspective. As someone who actually remembers playing these titles the first time around. I have to say that although the classic coin op gameplay has been retained, there's really very little here to appeal to todays game players. Given the chance would you really rather spend an evening playing a dated shoot 'em up or tackling the graphical delights of Panzer Dragoon Zwei? Exactly. Purely for limited novelty value only.

comment

GUS

Well, retro gaming has finally caught up with me. As a relative youngster compared to the rest of the MEAN MACHINES crew, this trio are about the earliest games I can recall playing. And I'm happy to say that my memory has not failed me as all three are arcade perfect. This isn't such a good thing in the case of Space Harrier because it always was a bit naff but supreme overlord of sprite based driving games Outrun is one of my favourite racing experiences of all time. Afterburner is a fairly shallow experience but that makes it perfect for those ten minute slots when you've nothing better to do. Although it's strange how you can string those ten minute slots together into three hour sessions sometimes.

scores

GRAPHICS They're arcade perfect, but they're not exactly hi-res polygon masterpieces. The speed of the 3D just goes to show how well the Saturn handles sprite scaling. **75**

SOUND Original and arranged versions of all the tunes are included. The general consensus in the office is that the Outrun ditties are amongst the best bits of computer game music ever committed to silicon. **81**

PLAYABILITY That classic Sega playability is in effect here as Outrun simply oozes gameplay. Space Harrier and Afterburner are more limited, but are still a remarkable experience after all this time. **90**

LASTABILITY Outrun and Afterburner are the kind of games that you can load up for ten minutes now and again and as such will last for years. Space Harrier is the runt of the litter: it was never that good in the arcades. **85**

overall

These games have stood the test of time well. Space Harrier lets the side down, but Outrun is almost worth the price of admission alone.

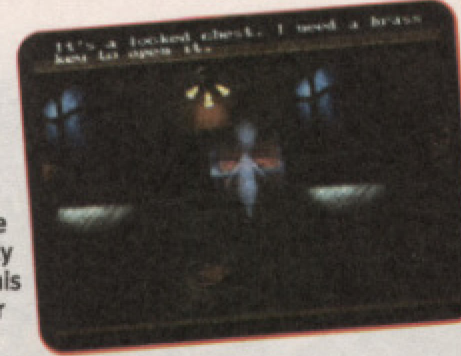
84

review

Game Name	Casper
Publisher	Interplay
Release	Out Now
Price	£44.99
Game Style	Puzzle
Import?	✗
Linkplay?	✗
Players	1
Control	Joypad
Background	Funcom's stab at the kids movie license from '95

The spectre of another film license rises to haunt us in the ethereal form of Casper, based on the movie starring her from the Addams Family, Christina Ricci.

Except she plays no real part in the game proceedings, probably because she would want some share of the game royalties. Instead the main, and infinitely cheaper, special effect character of Casper goes on a massive romp around his haunted mansion in a bid to make friends with the two 'fleshies'; Kat and her father, Doctor Harvey, and foil the nasty ghosts of his former uncles. As Paul McKenna might say: "you are feeling sleepy, very sleepy".



CASPER



WOAH BODY FORM

Casper's one ghostly grace is the ability to morph into various forms (inevitably used as a basis for puzzles). He first has to collect the icons to learn how to turn to smoke, allowing him to use the mansion's ventilation ducts or form a bouncing ball.



comment

What is it that ghosts do best? Float through walls. What can't you do in Casper? Float through walls. Why not? Because that would spoil the simplistic 'find keys and switches' gameplay. Combine this horrendously missed opportunity with dull music that sounds like it's been lifted from a Tintin cartoon and muddy graphics that are a complete non event and you get one of the most boring and pointless Saturn releases for quite some time. After playing it for half an hour I was practically bored to tears. A frightening flop I'm afraid.

MATT

FAMILY VALUES

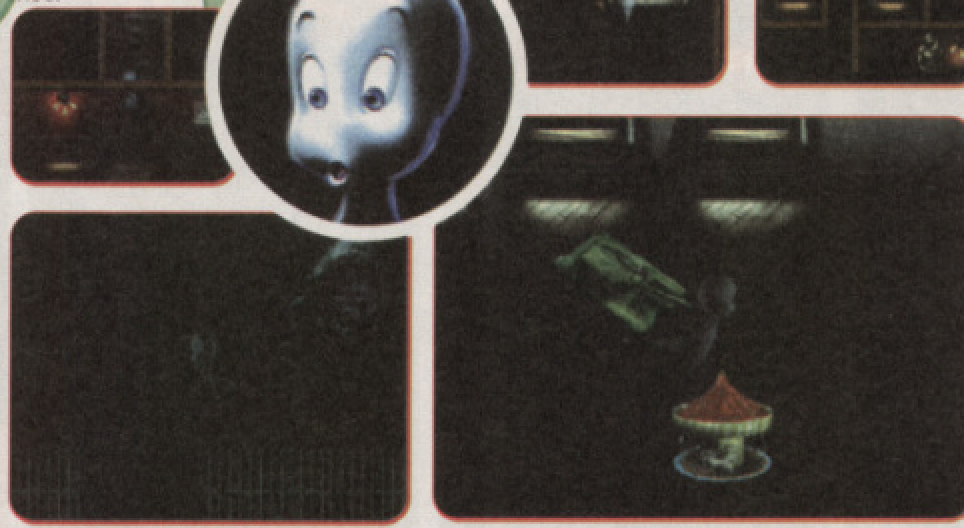
Casper confronts his uncles one by one, who each have a piece of the resurrecting Lazarus Machine in their possession. To relieve them of these, Casper has to find a weakness for each relating to their characters.



A-Z OF GAMING

Casper is fundamentally a puzzle game set across a maze, where the essence is taking object A to point B, thus causing C to happen. Occasionally there is cause for lateral thought to solve a teaser. As the game expands, the distances to cross to bring the elements of puzzles together increase, so the game's advice to create a map is wise.





scores

GRAPHICS	73
SOUND	75
PLAYABILITY	53
LASTABILITY	55

overall

Casper proves once again that most movie licensed games are shallow, unimaginative and completely pointless.

54



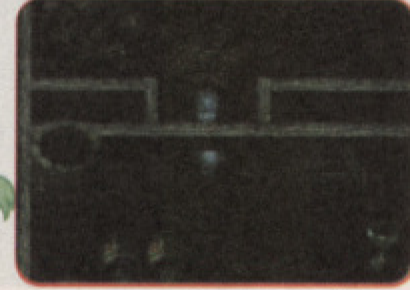
comment

How this mind numbingly dull film did so well last year is beyond me, but it's too far gone to do the game any good. Which is fine, considering this is one of the most tedious challenges ever created for the Saturn. The idea of a maze based puzzle game has been tried before, Addams Family Values on Megadrive for example, but the displacement of such utterly limited gameplay objectives onto a 32 bit machine, with only reasonable graphics to lighten it is unacceptable. None of the developments within the game offer any real surprise or reward and the scenery is almost wholly un-interactive.

GUS

MANY MANSIONS

Casper's home is huge, there are loads of scrolling maps, and he has more trouble moving through it than you might consider a ghost would. Doors and walls present the same problems as for humans, so a large part of the game involves finding keys and pulling switches, which activate the innumerable 'secret' door mechanisms.



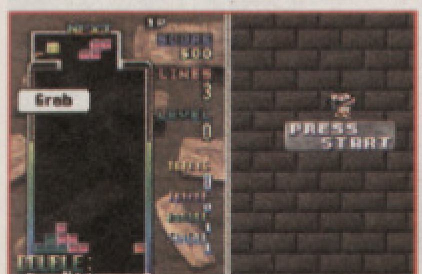


review

Game Name	Tetris Plus
Publisher	Jaleco
Release	TBA — Price: TBA
Game Style	Puzzle
Import? ✗	Linkplay? ✗ — Players: 1-2
Control	Joypad
Background	Another update of the classic Tetris formula.

Tetris is undoubtedly the most addictive puzzler in the history of games. Inevitably, someone's created a Saturn version. Join us in a look at the connoisseurs' choice of video games

When you think of Tetris two words spring to mind, Game Boy and addictivness. I'm sure that every single one of you out there has played Tetris at some time or other — hell even my mum has had a go! Tetris has universal appeal, no need for instructions: you instinctively create lines from shapes, each of which is formed of four blocks, and watch them disappear. Tetris Plus is a god-send for fans as the original game is joined by a Vs Mode, Puzzle Mode and Edit option. Jaleco has added its own Story Mode — two intrepid treasure hunters set out to find loot amongst the blocks.





TETRIS PLUS

PUZZLES, PUZZLES, PUZZLES!!!

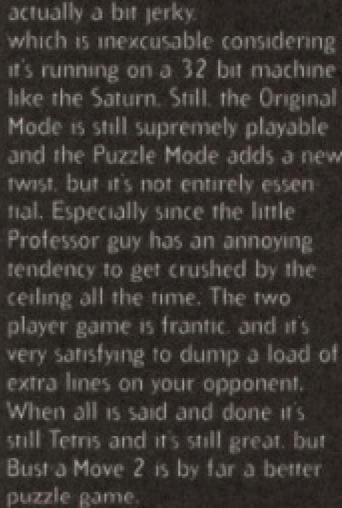
Puzzle Mode is easily the toughest mode. You navigate the Professor to the goal line at the bottom of the screen against the clock. Blocks in his path are removed by combining them with falling pieces. Above the professor descends a rotating blade, forcing the player to form life-saving strategies quickly.



VS MODE

Here, two players tackle each other over three sweat-soaked rounds. The gameplay is similar to the solo mode, but every time a line is deleted by one side, two lines are passed to the opposition. Nastier effects are caused by deleting combinations of lines. (A technique Phil claims Matt has yet to grasp!)

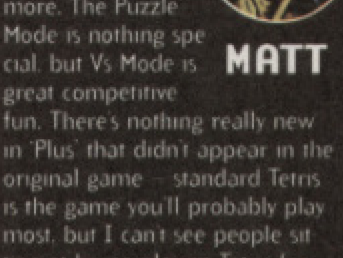
comment



STEVE

Well, it's Tetris alright. But somehow it looks a little lost on a big screen after years of playing it on a Gameboy. For some reason it's actually a bit jerky, which is inexcusable considering it's running on a 32 bit machine like the Saturn. Still, the Original Mode is still supremely playable and the Puzzle Mode adds a new twist, but it's not entirely essential. Especially since the little Professor guy has an annoying tendency to get crushed by the ceiling all the time. The two player game is frantic, and it's very satisfying to dump a load of extra lines on your opponent. When all is said and done it's still Tetris and it's still great, but Bust-a-Move 2 is by far a better puzzle game.

comment

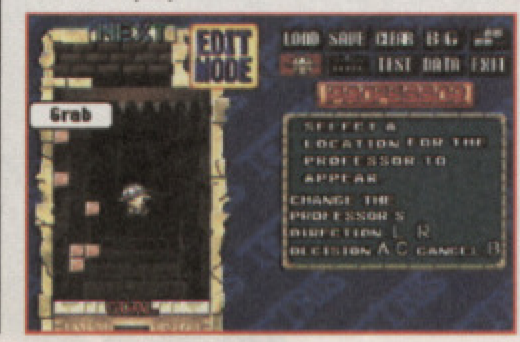


MATT

I love Tetris and Jaleco's offering has inspired me to play it even more. The Puzzle Mode is nothing special, but Vs Mode is great competitive fun. There's nothing really new in 'Plus' that didn't appear in the original game — standard Tetris is the game you'll probably play most, but I can't see people sitting at home playing Tetris for hours and hours like they used to. If you're into puzzle games then get this, especially if you have someone else to play with. If you think that you're going to be playing alone then I would personally opt for the more addictive Bust A Move 2 from Acclaim.

EDIT YOU LIKE

This neat little option allows players to lay out their own puzzle courses. The edit screen allows you to choose which background you like, how many blocks you want to put down to block the goal line and decide where the professor starts. You can save up to ten edits for future play.



Review

Block, block, blockaboots!

scores

GRAPHICS	62
SOUND	60
PLAYABILITY	74
LASTABILITY	67

overall

The most famous puzzle game ever reaches the Saturn, but it's hasn't kept up with the times. Not as good as Bust-a-Move 2.

69



review

Game Name	Break Point
Publisher	Ocean
Release	December
Price	TBA
Game Style	Tennis
Import?	X
Linkplay?	X
Players	1-4
Control	Joypad
Background	It's new, but it's still tennis.

Tennis is another of those sports that we (the British) invented and are currently remarkably crap at.

Now budding Jeremy Bateses can practice crashing out in the first round with Breakpoint, Ocean's contribution to the not exactly overcrowded Saturn tennis market. So what makes Breakpoint different to other tennis games? Well, it could be that your player has to face the massed ranks of the evil Zorth empire on his way to the stadium armed only with a big bag full of rackets and a bottle of flavoured barley water. Actually that's cobblers, you just play tennis.

BREAK POINT

BALL BOY

As you might expect from the Saturn, all the relevant on-court participants are present in Breakpoint. Ball boys and girls run after errant yellow spheres, wrinkly old linesmen stare intently at the net for hours and the umpire sits up on his big high-chair, dispensing scores in his inimitable refined English sort of way. But what of the actual players, I hear you cry? Well, you get some of them too, up to four at once depending on the type of game. There are eight playable competitors to choose from and they all have their own strengths and weaknesses.

ORANGE DEUCE

There is only so much that you can do with a tennis game, and Breakpoint manages to do pretty much all of it. A Practice Mode and Single Match Singles and Doubles games are available, as well as Super Cup and Tournament challenges. The options screen allows you can tweak the parameters of the match to your liking and then choose from four different types of court. Grass, asphalt, clay and indoor courts all have different properties, with indoor being the fastest and grass the easiest to play on. Expect to see all types of court in the Cup mode, while the Tournament pitches you against all the other players in one location.

WHAT A RACQUET

There are eight playable characters in Breakpoint and here, for your delectation, are little box-outs on each of them.

JACQUES CHEVALIER

RANKING: THE BEST

Wrinkly old Jacques is one of the best players in the tournament. He's French, so he probably smells of onions in a clichéd fashion. And looks nothing like Cantona.

CARLA MINELLI

RANKING: VERY GOOD

No relation to diminutive star of stage and screen Liza, Carla has the fastest service in the game. Carla also fits the Italian stereotype of liking pasta and football. Maybe.

BRANDON KNIGHT

RANKING: VERY GOOD

He's got a silly name. He'll be an American then. Brandon is a versatile player and also looks like he's just had his cheeks inflated. Well he does in this picture, anyway.

KEIKO TAKAHASHI



RANKING: EXCELLENT

Japanese lass Keiko (that is a real name, incidentally) plays with chopsticks. Actually that's a lie, she uses a racquet just like everyone else. What a stupid stereotypical thing to say. Tut, tut.

PAUL WILLIAMS



RANKING: EXCELLENT

Paul slipped through the net at the British Are Crap At Tennis Academy and has consequently had considerable success. Favourite food: Bird's Eye Mini Kievs.

NATALIE FISCHER



RANKING: THE BEST

Another top ranker, Natalie is German and consequently wears leather shorts, eats lots of sausages and has hairy armpits. Goodness, we are xenophobic today, aren't we?

KATE YOUNG



RANKING: GOOD

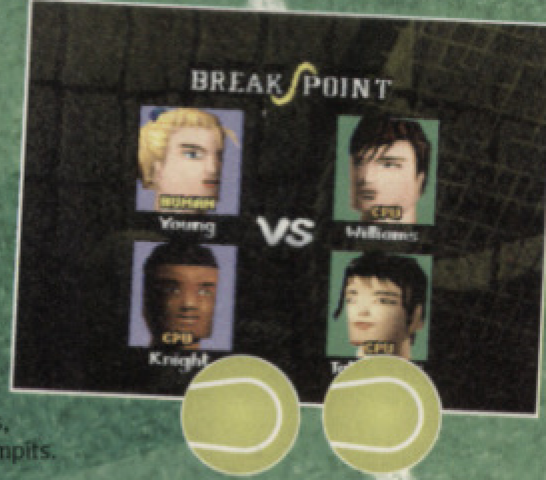
Although she is fast, youthful Kate doesn't yet have the experience to rank amongst the best. But then she's British so fame and fortune are unlikely to come her way anyhow.

ERIC SVENSON



RANKING: GOOD

Reckless Eric is an up-and-coming Scandinavian player and really likes those spicy meatballs you can get from IKEA. Probably drives a Volvo as well. Or a Saab.



comment

GUS

Like baseball games, I've never really seen the point of tennis sims. Surely they're just Pong with good graphics? But in Breakpoint's case it's just Pong with slightly better graphics because they're really not that impressive. The blocky courts and poorly animated players are disappointing - the way they amble around at the start of each game makes it look as if they're not really enjoying themselves. I have to admit I wasn't really enjoying myself either, there don't seem to be many shots available and there are only eight contestants to choose from. However, if you're desperate for a Saturn tennis game then Breakpoint should hit the spot.

comment

MATT

As the winter nights draw in and the temperature drops below zero, Ocean, in its infinite wisdom, decides to release a game based around one of the summer's more popular sports. Nice one lads. Bad timing aside, Breakpoint offers Saturn owners everything they'd expect from a tennis game including realistic courts, decent animation, that oh-so familiar playing angle and the opportunity to compete against increasingly tougher opponents. A smooth zooming camera covers all the action adequately and sampled sound effects add to the pseudo-Wimbledon feel. A few extra options and slicker presentation would have been welcome, though.

Review

scores

GRAPHICS Distinctive, but unfortunately quite blocky courts and motion captured players which look quite good at the back of the court but not so good close up. And they walk around the court sooo slowly as well. **65**

SOUND A crisp, well sampled commentary adds atmosphere but it is quite limited, only giving out the scores. The in-game effects are good too, but don't expect an aural overload. **76**

PLAYABILITY Very easy to pick up and play, but all the players seem similar and there isn't a massive range of shots. Computer players never leave the base line or foul up their service, which irritates sometimes. **74**

LASTABILITY As ever with this type of game, it will only last through the multi-player modes. But Breakpoint is so unremarkable that even they aren't much incentive to keep playing. **65**

overall

Possibly worth buying by virtue of being one of only two Saturn tennis games, but the wait for a great simulation of the sport continues...

64



review

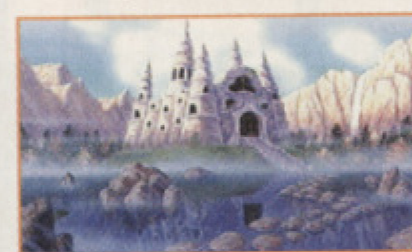
Game Name	Space Hulk
Publisher	Electronic arts
Release	TBA — Price: TBA
Game Style	Strategy/ Action
Import?	✓ — Linkplay? ✓ — Players: 1
Control	Joypad
Background	Based on the 3d0 update of the PC original.

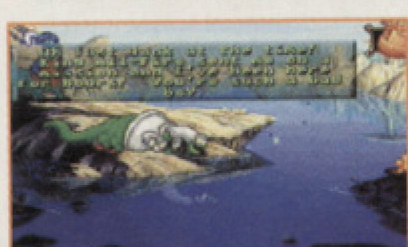
Consider the creative energy of the Monty Python team. A ground-breaking TV series, a string of classic films and a fish called Wanda. Now consider ex-Python Terry Jones' latest project. Oh well.



Over the ages, dragons have been mankind's enemy in many a myth and legend. Feared and reviled by peasants throughout the land, your common or garden dragon has been driven to cruel extinction by brave knights in freshly Pledged armour. So it's about time that someone showed the story from the dragons' point of view. Enter Blazing Dragons, a new point-and-click Saturn adventure which tells of a wacky bunch of Dragon Knights of the Square Table from Castle Camelhot who are feeling a bit put upon by a load of marauding humans led by St George and his magician. Who's called Mervin.









BLAZING DRAGONS

Comedy convention

Being a humorous sort of chap, Terry Jones has given all the Dragon Knights their own comedy personalities. Hence you have the stunningly myopic Sir Gasflame and the vain Sir Burnevere. Add to this hard of hearing castle attendants, barking mad psychiatrists and their severely troubled patients and you have the fully range of clichéd Python-esque characters. In an attempt to split a few more sides, some of the situations Flicker gets himself into are equally mirth-packed. Witness the CAT-apult and try not to laugh. Go on, I dare you.





Sir Gasflame giving the King some hassle. This is probably the funniest bit in the game.

scores

GRAPHICS	62
SOUND	40
PLAYABILITY	80
LASTABILITY	52

overall

A shining example of how not to produce an enjoyable and entertaining 'point-and-click' adventure. Blazing Dragons has few redeeming features and should be taken outside and shot.



comment

GUS

Having seen an episode of the cartoon series beforehand, I didn't hold out high hopes for Blazing Dragons. Unfortunately playing the game did nothing to sway my prejudice. It looks basic, it simply isn't funny and the voice actors are among the most annoying I've ever heard. Admittedly the cartoon is aimed at children, but that's no excuse for a piece of basic, dull, patronising rubbish like this. Yes, there are a lack of decent point-and-click adventures for the Saturn, but that's no reason to buy Blazing Dragons. For ex-PC owners and diehard Python fans only.

comment



MATT

If Blazing Dragons was marketed as a simple, colourful children's adventure, no doubt PC magazines would claim it was great piece of 'edutainment' software. However, we Saturn owners know better and poor graphical adventures just aren't the reason we forked out £200 for our shiny 32 bit machine. Okay, so the presence of Terry Jones does add some seriously needed credibility to Blazing Dragons but just take a look at his recent movie, The Wind in the Willows, and you'll see that this ex-Python just isn't funny sometimes. Stick to Discworld if you must play this kind of game.

Get the girl, kill the baddies

Like most graphical adventures, Blazing Dragons has a fiercely thickening plot. You play Flicker, a young dragon with his eye on King Allfire's daughter, Flame. To get the lass, he must become a knight; and to do this he has to be trained by one of the existing knights, such as Sir Burnevere. To add to this merriment, all the other dragons are blissfully unaware of St. George's plot to take over Camelhot and so it's up Flicker to save the day as well.





review

MEGA DRIVE

Game Name	Virtua Fighter 2 Megadrive				
Publisher	Sega				
Release	Out Now	Price	£39.99		
Game Style	Beat-'em-up				
Import?	✗	Linkplay?	✗	Players	1-2
Control	Joypad				
Background	Sega's ground-breaking 3D fighter receives the 16 bit treatment				

They said it couldn't and shouldn't be done but Sega went and did it anyway. Yep, Virtua Fighter 2 finally arrives on the humble Megadrive but was the wait really worth it?

No one ever said that porting over a Model 2, polygon-churning, state-of-the-art coin-op was ever going to be easy but when has that ever stopped Sega? The good news for Megadrive owners is that Virtua Fighter 2 has survived the transition virtually (no pun intended) intact. Although the entire Virtua cast makes its 16-bit debut here, unfortunately Lion and Shun Di have been removed due to memory restrictions. What players are left with is a 2D beat-'em-up that attempts to emulate the 'feel' of the original arcade experience even if the visuals are sorely lacking.

MAID OF STEEL

Hardcore Virtua Fighter fans will no doubt be overjoyed to learn that even the Megadrive version of the game contains the menacing final bonus stage of Dural. Created by the sinister J6 Corporation and believed to be an android copy of Kage's mother, Dural is capable of duplicating the fighting styles of any of the other combatants. Once players have vanquished all eight foes (including an exact lookalike), only this metallic monster remains between you and supreme victory.

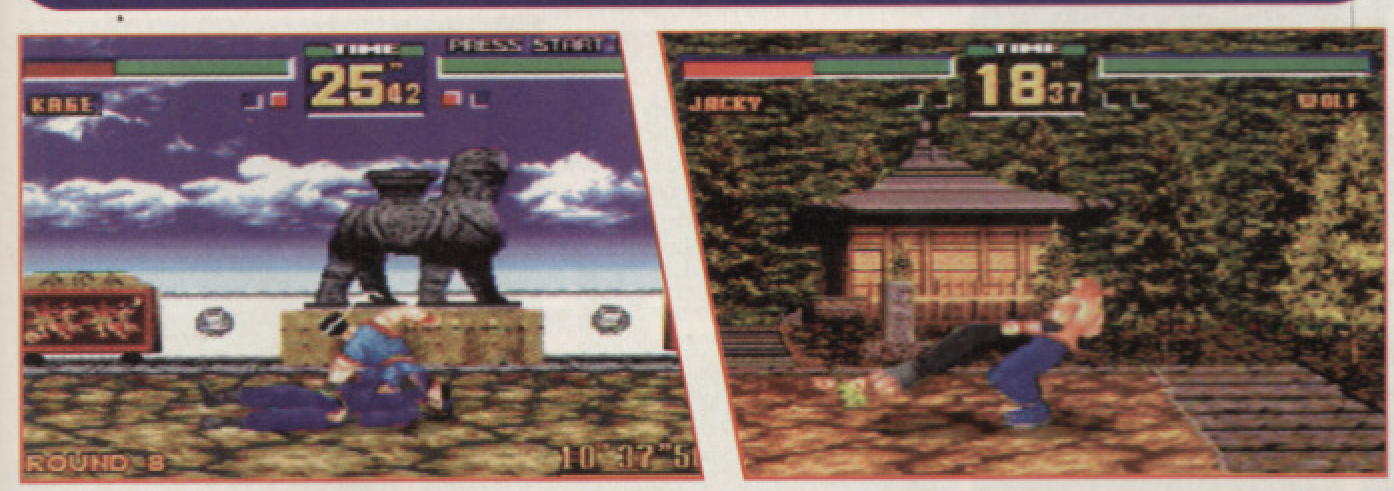
PRESENT AND CORRECT

Sega has managed to incorporate all your favourite fighters into VF2 although both Shun Di and Lion are completely absent (so don't bother sending us any cheats stating that you've 'discovered' them!). Novice Virtua Fighter players will probably want to begin their training with the likes of Akira and Kage before moving on to more complicated characters such as Lau. However don't be deceived by the games simplistic 3 button set-up. With over 700 moves to master, VF2 has plenty of gameplay depth to make up for its seriously lacking graphics.

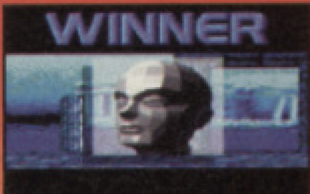


Virtua Fighter 2

MEGA DRIVE



MODES A-PLENTY



Although nowhere near as comprehensive as its 32 bit big brother, the Megadrive version of Virtua Fighter 2 still manages to offer players quite a few options to mess around with. For a start there's the Arcade Mode where fighters take on eight opponents before battling the rock-hard T1000 clone, Dural. VS Mode enables two players to slug it out to see who's the toughest over a series of bouts that may be won by draining your foe's life bar or forcing them out of the arena (scoring a 'Ring Out'). Finally the main Options screen enables players to alter bout lengths, switch the timer off, customise their Joypad controls and even bump their energy bar up to a massive level. Handy, eh?



comment

GUS

Matt and I differ on this. I agree that Virtua Fighter is an ambitious proposition, and of course it's nowhere near the Saturn version. But I do think it successfully captures the identity and character of the VF world. The backgrounds look stunning, and the sprites, though simply animated, follow the patterns from the Saturn game. It does fall down in comparison with MK3 which is much faster and slicker, but I wouldn't say it's a total dead loss.

comment

MATT

There's no denying that the Megadrive is still a great games console but, as the 16 bit conversion of Virtua Fighter shows, Sega's outdated hardware has finally reached its limits. Attempting to convert AM2's classic coin-op to a machine that's on its last legs was at best a dodgy idea and the finished product shows that some things in life are best left alone. VF2 suffers from one major problem: a lack of identity. As a 2D beat-'em-up, the game is nowhere near as impressive as Street Fighter or Mortal Kombat 2 and as a 3D fighting experience, well er... it just isn't! Sega of Japan must be commended for taking on such a monumental task but their near perfect track record has now been marred by this over ambitious and unimpressive title.

scores

GRAPHICS Well, they're not 3D that's for sure! Badly animated visuals that move slowly and respond poorly. The underwater Dural bonus stage in particular is slow beyond belief. **75**

SOUND No CD quality BGM for you lot. Instead the Megadrive's internal sound chip attempts to emulate the coin-op's classic tunes. It fails. Naff sound effects fail to enhance the on screen action. **62**

PLAYABILITY Character response is very poor and attempting to perform even the most basic of combos results in the CPU whupping your butt. VS Mode offers more fun but only because players perform as badly as each other. **78**

LASTABILITY The one redeeming factor with any Virtua Fighter game is the amazing wealth of character moves to discover and then master. Fortunately VF2 on the Megadrive features most of these moves. **80**

overall

A brave attempt at converting an amazing coin-op. Let down by hardware limitations and player expectations. If you hadn't thought about upgrading to a Saturn before then maybe this'll convince you. **77**

review

Game Name	Williams Arcade's Hits
Publisher	THQ
Release	Out Now · Price £39.99
Game Style	Shoot-'em-up
Import? ✗	Linkplay? ✗ · Players 1-2
Control	Joypad
Background	A collection of classic coin-op conversions.

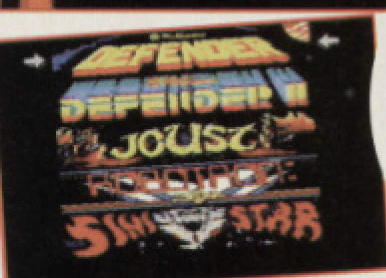
It's a bit bizarre that as the Megadrive's popularity finally begins to fade one of its last great titles just happens to be a collection of retro games, most of which are over ten years old!

Often criticised in the past for poor software releases, THQ has finally seen the light and released a product that should sell like hot cakes. Grizzled old fogies, like me and Gus, are able to take a trip down memory lane once more ("Eee, I remember when games were really games), whilst you young bucks get to blast your way through some of the toughest titles to ever grace an arcade cabinet.





THQ has crammed five of the most exciting arcade games ever onto one classic cartridge. Now if that isn't value for money we don't know what is..





WILLIAMS AR[CADE'S] GREATEST

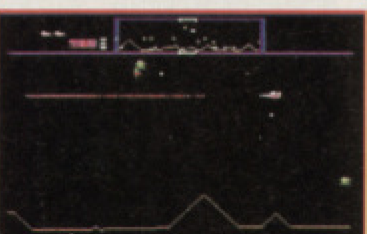
BLAST FROM THE PAST!

Defender

In 1980, Williams' took the tried-and-tested arcade shoot-'em-up formula of Space Invaders, turned the whole thing on its side and produced the rock-hard blaster known as Defender. Basically, players fly their fighter craft over a side scrolling landscape protecting humans from alien abduction. Kick extraterrestrial butt, save innocents from being kidnapped and try to stay alive for as long as possible. Wave after wave of mutants, UFOs and spaceborne scum will have Megadrive owners pulling their hair out with frustration.

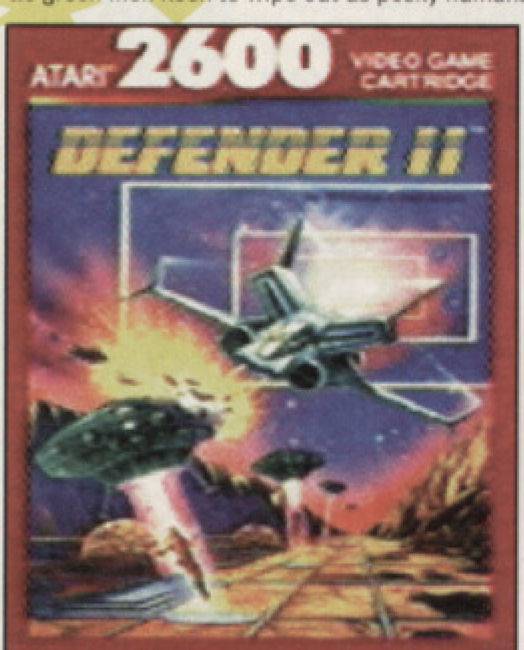


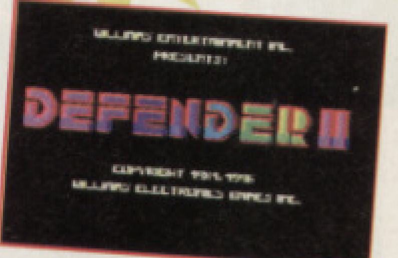




Defender II

Although considered a bit of a pale imitation at the time, Defender II has stood the test of time as well as its predecessor. The addition of warp gates, allowing life-saving hyperspace jumps to be performed, add an all new strategy element to the game but there's really very little variation between the two titles available on this cart. However, the action is still set at a breakneck speed and players will be tested to their limits by even more little green men keen to wipe out us pesky humans.







Defender II stands out from its predecessor thanks to the addition of warp gates and tougher enemies. Can you stop those pesky aliens?



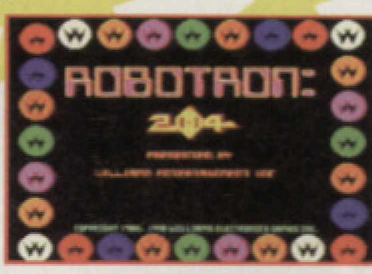
"I LIVE!" The menacing might of Sinistar still manages to scare Gus to death. He's such a scaredy cat.



Robotron

Responsible for spawning the likes of Smash TV and Total Carnage, Robotron is a ker-azy psychedelic shoot-'em-up requiring lightning fast reflexes and trigger finger blistering action. Dash around enclosed arenas rescuing humans and blasting barmy 'bots before warping to the next stage. The original arcade version of Robotron featured a dual joystick control method enabling players to run in one direction whilst firing in another. Fortunately, this set-up has been simplified for the Megadrive game with three buttons being used for directional fire.



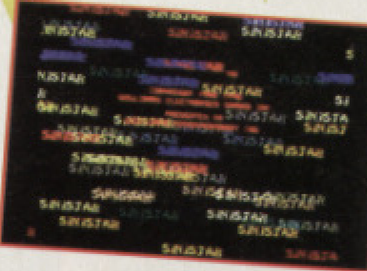




Sinistar

As the only video game to ever scare the witts out of our esteemed Editor, Robotron also has the honour of being the first Williams' arcade title to boast sampled speech. Featuring similar play mechanics to yet another ancient coin-op, Asteroids, Sinistar requires players to mine elements for super bombs as these are the only devices capable of stopping an evil mechanoid known as er... Sinistar. Dodge enemy craft, locate meteors rich in ore and stay one step ahead of a menacing metallic monster. Run coward, run!







ARCADE'S HITS



Sinistar may look like a simple game but it's actually rock-hard.

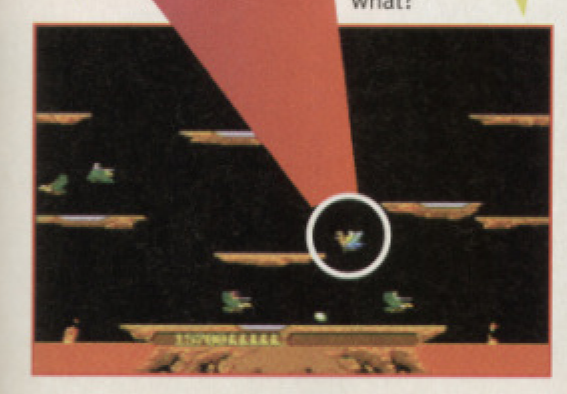
Joust

Definitely a contender for "Most bizarre video game concept ever", Joust features some unique gameplay mechanics requiring players to control their momentum whilst straddling a strange ostrich-like bird. As the only true two player game included in the package, Joust offers hours of hilarious wing-flapping as you attempt to collect eggs, smash riders off their steeds and dodge deadly flying lizards. As with all the titles in the Greatest Hits compilation, there's no actual ending to Joust as each progressive level just keeps getting tougher.



TRIVIA TIME

Here's a crafty question for all you video game know-it-alls: In Mortal Kombat 3, when Shang Tsung performs his Friendship move, ever wondered just what he transforms into? Well, the answer is that old Shang changes into a Joust rider and then flaps off the screen perhaps in search of an egg or two. Weird or what?



comment

GUS

The true benchtest for a retro games compilation is the unforgiving eye of Doctor Dave Kelsall, the micro goblin. Like everyone else, he thinks Williams Arcade Classics on Megadrive is an excellent rendition, and just as faithful as the Playstation version. Being honest, the only pair out of this collection I really liked were Sinistar and Robotron (I always died on Defender within 5 milliseconds). The Sinistar here is mind-blowingly close to the arcade game. Robotron is slightly spoiled by the bizarre arrangements for firing. Even if these are not life-long favourites, Williams Classics is worth getting just to get a genuine feeling of what early 80s games meant.

comment

MATT

There's certainly no denying that THQ has produced an impressive 16 bit package that not only offers Megadrive owners real value for money but also gives them a true challenge. Game players constantly complain that video games these days are just too easy to complete but that's certainly not the case with Williams Arcade's Greatest Hits. These titles weren't meant to be finished, levels are (virtually) infinite and high scores are the order of the day. Okay, so the graphics aren't exactly eye-popping but at least they're arcade perfect, a claim that many next generation games attempt to make but very few seem to deliver. For a nostalgic trip through video games of yesteryear, Williams Arcade's Greatest hits is a real blast.

scores

GRAPHICS — Okay, so the visuals are basic to say the least but they're arcade perfect, super fast and bring back fond memories of our youth. Sniff! **89**

SOUND — Unremarkable tunes at best but crisp sound effects and Sinistar's spooky sampled speech are guaranteed to raise a smile on any gamers face. **85**

PLAYABILITY — Each of these titles has had over ten years worth of games testing so, as you'd expect, the playability is absolutely spot-on. **91**

LASTABILITY — Forget end game sequences or final boss monsters, each title features infinite levels that increase in difficulty. **93**

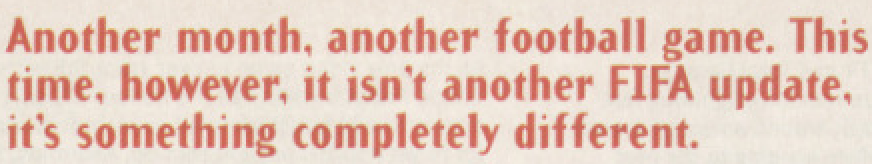
overall

A fantastic collection of classic games sure to stir the memory's of older Megadrive owners and show you perishing kids how video games should be done! **90**



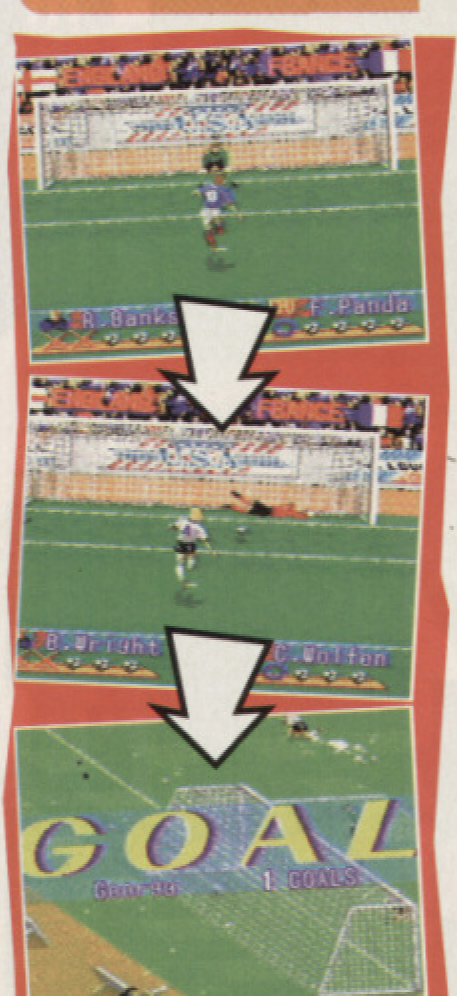
review

Mega Drive			
Game Name	International Superstar Soccer Deluxe		
Publisher	Konami		
Release	December	Price	£44.99
Game Style	Football		
Import?	✗	Linkplay? ✗	Players 1-8
Control	Joypad		
Background	22 men, two goals, a field and a ball. Well what did you expect?		



Another month, another football game. This time, however, it isn't another FIFA update, it's something completely different.

Well, obviously not totally completely different or it wouldn't be football. International Superstar Soccer Deluxe is Konami's late offering into the Megadrive footie market. Converted from the acclaimed SNES version, ISS has been touted as the best thing ever. Boasting motion captured players and TV style commentary, who are we to argue?





Goal mouth confusion as neither side appear to know where the ball is. Fools, the lot of them.





BUSINESS AS USUAL

Of course a footie game made up of just a Training Mode and a scenario challenge would get very dull, very quickly. So in addition to these more innovative features, you can play plain old international friendlies, tournaments and even a World Series. You can set the formation of your team and decide between an offensive or defensive strategy. There are a wide selection of international squads to play as, all with their own strengths and weaknesses, and you can also select the stadium you want to play in as each one has a different pitch.



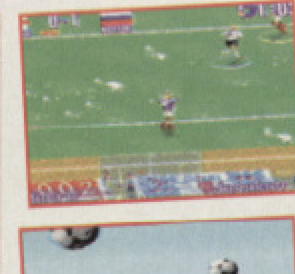






Germany and the Czechs prepare to kick off. It's so exciting I can hardly contain myself.











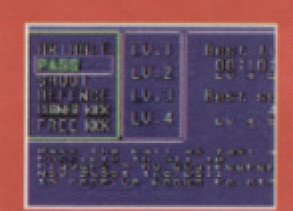
PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT



Before the big game you can take your team down the park for a kickabout. Choose between a free practice session, free kicks, goal keeping or defence and then practice, practice, practice until you're happy with the way 'the lads' are performing. Also on the training menu is a Challenge Mode which gives you a set task to perform such as beating a defensive wall and then scoring, and a record time to beat whilst doing it. This mode also has four skill levels that provide increasingly taxing opposition.

INTERNATIONAL PERSTAR CCER

THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER



Another unusual feature in ISS is the Scenario Mode. This pitches you in at the deep end as your team has a certain amount of goals to score, and only the dying minutes of the match to do it in. To make matters worse, you can't choose your team, so if the computer decides you're gonna be Croatia, you're stuck with it. Expect to fail miserably in this mode unless you possess God-like console footie skills.

comment

MATT

Konami should be applauded for taking a brave step into the increasingly over-crowded football game field. With the FIFA's and Sensible Soccer's of the world reigning supreme any half decent footie game needs to have an extra special winning ingredient to guarantee its success. Fortunately ISS Deluxe has a great blend of tight controls, well-animated players and a ton of options to wade through. Although not as instantly enjoyable as the highly polished ball-booting action of FIFA '97, ISS Deluxe does grow on you after a while with the eight player mode providing hours of entertainment. Recommended if you want a slightly different footie experience.

comment

GUS

I'm in two minds about ISS Deluxe. On the one hand it offers welcome new gameplay features such as the Training Mode and scenarios, and there's even an exciting eight player feature. But on the down side, it doesn't look as good as FIFA and, as there is only a small area of pitch visible, it's often hard to see exactly what is going on. That's just in a one player game; if there are four or eight of you don't expect your player to be that visible during each game. There is a radar to compensate for this, but you don't want to have to play off that all the time. It's nice to see some innovation in a football game, but besides that, ISS Deluxe doesn't quite make the Megadrive Premier League.

scores

GRAPHICS — Each stadium has a different pitch and the players are fairly well animated but the options screens are an eye-bleeding overload of flashing neon hues. Only a small area of the pitch is visible, so it's hard to see what's going on. **78**

SOUND — The commentary is sparse but very accurate. Crowd roars and spot effects are authentic enough. The in-game music, however, is criminally cheesy so make sure you play ISS Deluxe with the volume turned down. **74**

PLAYABILITY — Initially it feels as if you don't really have any control over your players, but after a while, in the Training Mode, you get a feel for what's going on. You'll soon be scoring off volleys and hitting the net every time. **86**

LASTABILITY — With an eight player mode, longevity is assured. The main impediment to lastability in footie games is usually frustrating Joypad controls. Fortunately ISS Deluxe plays well enough to last. **88**

overall

After innumerable FIFA's, ISS Deluxe is a welcome breath of fresh air. It's not the best looking footie game ever and the small visible pitch area can be frustrating, but it plays well and is a right laugh in eight player mode.

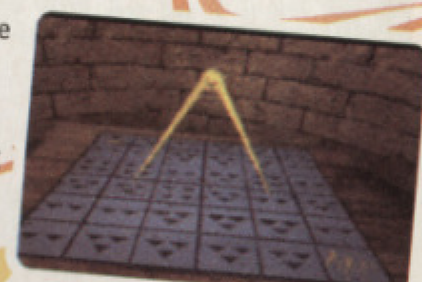
81

review

Game Name	Jewel of the Oracle
Publisher	Sunsoft
Release	December
Price	£44.99
Game Style	Puzzle
Import?	✕
Linkplay?	✕
Players	1
Control	Joypad
Background	A collection of puzzles in a Myst-style setting.

Now you don't have to be a cream cake-loving agorophobic from Cheltenham called Doreen to take part in the 'Crystal Maze'. Everyone can pretend with Jewel of the Oracle.

Sunsoft has looked to its only hit of last year, Myst, in a bid to capture the Saturn puzzle market, whose devotees are so rarely considered. But whereas Myst was a deeply plotted work of fiction, two years in the making, Sunsoft's own imitation, Jewel of the Oracle, is pared down to 30 abstract puzzles by themselves. And many of them, using symbol tiles or primitive mechanisms, look straight out of that Channel Four adult adventure playground we mentioned earlier.



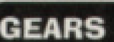
JEWEL OF THE ORACLE

THIS IS A LOCK-IN GAME

You can always walk away from a puzzle unfinished, and return to the main cavern, but it will be reset when you return to it. The later selection of puzzles come when you've completed the first set.



RUMA
Inspired by an African puzzle game, move all the stones into the large Ruma from the smaller pits.



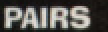
GEARS
Twelve balls to lie on six wheels, but none must be in direct opposition.



PEGS
Reverse the side of the 'locusts' by jumping over pegs into empty spaces.



SCARAB
Use foresight to guide every ball to the exit with the scarab. Very tricky.



PAIRS
These ten objects share paired relationships, but the bases of these are a mystery.



TILES
All the edges must match, but it seems impossible to achieve.

WELL, WELL, WELL

The gems are initially scattered to thirty dislocated chambers and the way to access them is to peer into a mysterious pool in the main cavern. There are switches around the pool which create a path through the pool to the puzzle, a vague outline of which is shown through the murk.

scores

GRAPHICS	40
SOUND	51
PLAYABILITY	63
LASTABILITY	65

overall

The innovation isn't in doubt, but assuming there is a Saturn audience for this kind of mental punishment is rather optimistic

64

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

To 'help' you there is the Oracle, an advisor who seems to be a family relation of Eric Cantona. If you prompt him for help on a nasty teaser you'll get pronouncements like; "Explore beyond those obvious steps that rule before your eyes". Oh, that's much better then!



comment

GUS

Jewel of the Oracle would drive 95% of the population barmy, and unless you are a member of Mensa, I would steer well clear. The game's use of FMV makes it appear superficially within the same bracket as D and Myst, but those games were stories with, in reality, a gentle puzzle element. In contrast, Jewel of the Oracle's puzzle are cold, abstract and hard. This doesn't make it a bad game – even the gloomy, cruddy graphics don't make it a bad game. Smart arses will love it, but if you're not a smart arse...

comment

STEVE

Blimey! This IS the Crystal Maze, except without the bald guy and people shouting "I'm coming out" all the time. The puzzles do have a certain attraction if you want to stretch your grey matter, but your average beat-'em-up fan will most likely find it far too cerebral. Some of the games do seemed to be based on 'popular' board games like Downfall and there is no reason why you couldn't get the same enjoyment from one of those puzzle books you always used to take on holiday when you were a kid. As Gus says, Jewel of the Oracle is for Mensa-standard IQs only.



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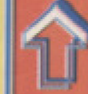
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PREVIEWS

There's plenty of variety this month as we preview Interplay's retro-blaster, Tempest 2000, check out comic book capers in Batman Forever and The Incredible Hulk, and take a sneak peek at a selection of soon-to-be-seen sports sims.

preview

Game Name	BUG TOO!
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Away Team
Release	January

BUG TOO!



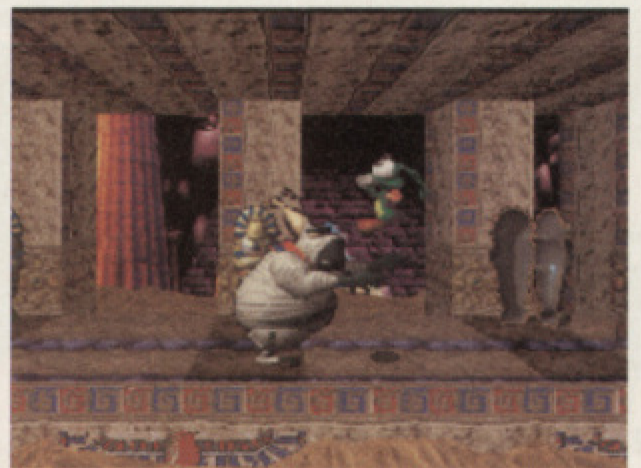
Remember Qbert? One of the many bonus levels in BUG TOO! features a similar block-hopping stage.

Although the original Saturn launch is now fast approaching its two year anniversary, Sega has still yet to release a 32 bit version of Sonic. The recently canned Sonic Xtreme was a brief light at the end of the tunnel but the fact remains: the Saturn has no mascot character. Or does it? In an attempt to create a stand-in (or maybe a replacement?) for the blue spiky one, Sega US developed the semi-original 3D platforming insect-with-attitude, BUG!
Although nowhere near as impressive as Sonic in the playability department, BUG! did hint at some of the Saturn's graphical potential by crafting a detailed 3D world bulging with comical characters and maddening gameplay. Now Sega's Away Team is busily putting the final touches to what could be an impressive sequel, the imaginatively titled BUG TOO!



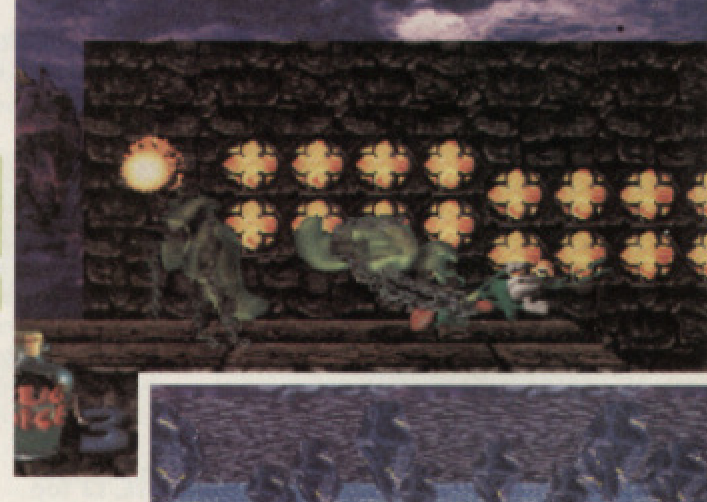
BUZZ OFF!

As with the first game, BUG TOO! is set over a number of increasingly tricky 3D stages each of which presents our green-gilled hero with a number of platforming challenges. So far we've seen the likes of the Space Corkscrew level which features some of the most bizarre aliens this side of Toe Jam and Earl (hey, remember those guys?) and impressive rotational effects. Also making a welcome return are the wacky bonus levels with BUG TOO! featuring such hidden sections as a Qbert-style level and a space car race.



CREATURE COMFORTS

Although strictly a one player game, BUG TOO! actually offers three selectable characters including old antenna-head himself. The other two creepy crawlies making their grand entrance include Bug's dog, who lollops around each level, tongue hanging out from its gormless face. Then there's Superfly, a cool creature with hilarious '70s Afro hairstyle and mirrored shades. We've yet to discover whether these new guys have any specialised moves or if they just mimic Bug's attack styles but even our brief preview glimpse was enough to tell us that these characters will be hilarious welcome additions.





WINGED WONDER

Sega's Away Team have spent their development time wisely as BUG TOO! features few graphical glitches with smooth scrolling and polygon pop-up reduced to a minimum. In fact the whole game has been tweaked by a group of programmers who have obviously come to grips with the Saturn's often tricky hardware. With any luck, BUG TOO! should emerge from its development chrysalis before the end of '96.



ARCADIA

Welcome to Arcadia, MEAN MACHINES SEGA's up-to-the-minute coin-op section. If you're looking for the latest, information on state-of-the-art arcade machines then you've come to the right place. It's a beat 'em up frenzy this month as the recent JAMMA '96 show in Japan revealed the hottest fighting games scheduled to hit arcades over the next few months...



BLAST CHAMBER

preview

Game Name	Blast Chamber
Publisher	Activision
	Activision
Release	December

Video game history is littered with titles based on futuristic sports. The classic Speedball series remains the most well known, and two new games, Pitball and Gridrun are currently in development. Now Activision is pitching in its money's worth with Blast Chamber, which promises all sorts of four player deathmatch hi-jinks.



IT'S A BIT LIKE...

There are similarities between Blast Chamber and that game on Gladiators where the contestants have to get balls into their goal to score points. However, the added twist here is that each of the four players has a bomb strapped to them and their counter is ticking away. To avoid premature detonation, you have to get the ball into your goal, which adds valuable seconds to your clock. Drop it in another competitor's goal and time is taken off their counter. Of course they are out to do the same to you, so you have to constantly remain on your toes.





MAGIC ROUNDABOUT

To spice up the action further, the arenas in Blast Chamber can be rotated by stepping on pressure pads located in the walls. Each rotation spins the chamber through ninety degrees, and if you are holding the ball when the chamber turns, you'll lose possession of it whilst plummeting to the new floor. Often each player's goal will be on a different wall so much rotation is inevitable. Some parts of each arena are also only accessible by rotating the chamber.



MODES OF DOOM

The one player survival game pits you against 40 cunningly designed chambers with no opponents to get in the way. Championship and Eliminator modes are open for up to four human players and are set within 20 multi-player arenas. In the Championship Mode players are awarded points depending on how well you did in each arena. The Eliminator game simply awards first place to the last player alive after a single match.

DRAGONHEART

All of a sudden film licenses seem to be back in fashion. Both Alien Trilogy and Die Hard Trilogy are fine examples of well-crafted movie tie-ins, the fact that they've both been developed by the funky folks at Probe can't be a bad thing either. Probably known as the software house with the most licensed products under its belt, Acclaim has yet another big name film game up its sleeves and this one's got real bite. Based on the summer kids movie of the same name, Dragonheart: Fire and Steel is a multi-level Mediaeval romp packed with plenty of sword and sorcery action, winged flying beasties, chivalry and all that other Dark Ages stuff.



preview

Game Name	Dragonheart
Publisher	Acclaim
	Grey Matter
Release	December



DRAGON BALL

To break up the platform sections, there are also first person FMV flying sequences with your character sitting on the back of Draco the Dragon as he flies through canyons and thick forests. These are limited in terms of interaction, resembling old Mega CD titles like Road Avenger, but they are well rendered and do add some variety to the game.

HEART OF DARKNESS

Since we're not allowed out to the cinema on our own, we can't say how closely the game sticks to the plot of the film. The stages are quite varied though; in the first few levels you'll battle through ruins and eagle-infested valleys. The game is presented in a kind of Mediaeval/Knights of the Round Table style, and parchment maps are also on hand to guide you. There's still plenty of work to be done before Dragonheart: Fire and Steel lands on a Saturn near you but if Acclaim's past track record is anything to go by this should be a mildly entertaining movie tie-in at the very least.

X-MEN VS STREET FIGHTER

You only have to look at the name to know this game offers more action than you ever thought possible! As one of the most popular games of the show you really had to wait a long time to get a game. Boasting superlative gameplay and graphics that must be pushing the board to the limit X-Men Vs Street Fighter was the game that everyone wanted to play. For pure excitement it just couldn't be beaten! First impressions by those who played it were very favourable with most people agreeing that Capcom had got the balance right between the mutant X-Men and the more human Street Fighters. Graphically, everyone was stunned that they'd been able to squeeze a game as great as this out of the CP-SYSTEM II.





TEMPEST 2000



Game Name	Tempest 2000
Publisher	Interplay
Developer	High Velocity
Release	January

'Welcome, O Tempest. You will last far longer than all new machines with names like Daddy Longlegs and Pro-Celebrity Tiddlywinks. You and I have a rendezvous. I will see you around'

Martin Amis, Invasion of the Space Invaders (1982)

For Tempest we have to thank Atari, past and present. If you're the type of gamer who likes to hark back to the glory days of pure gameplay, you could do worse than take Tempest as an example. Even the original had a pace and intensity of action that puts many modern day games to shame. It's visionary, abstract, represents the apex of Atari's ideals and the beginning of their fall. It's the nature of the gameplay that led Jeff Minter, an eccentric star programmer of the Commodore 64 days to update it for the Atari Jaguar console, back in 1994. Thankfully, Interplay saw the sense in bringing the new version to a wider audience and their conversion house looks to have set about a pixel-perfect Saturn edition.

The play area is a series of 99 wire-frame 3D webs, which the player clings to at the near end. Enemies progress from the far end, and need to be destroyed before they reach the player and drag him to oblivion. Each web is split into sectors, progressively folded into more complex patterns. The player's craft zooms across these, occupying only one at any one time, and capable of destroy anything in his line of fire.



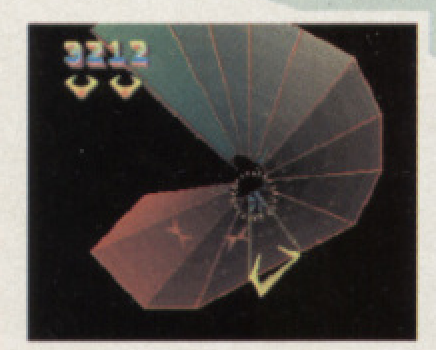


THE CLASSIC TEMPEST

A version of the original 1980 arcade game is included. It looks faithful, but can never be for a fundamental technical reason. The coin-op was one of a few in the early '80s to use a Vectorscan (Atari chose to call their proprietary system 'Quadrascan') visual display system, quite different to all other standard televisions and monitors. Your TV uses a rasterscan system — where a beam from the cathode ray traces the screen from top to bottom, back and forth in horizontal lines, colouring each pixel. For early computers, this method put an onerous pressure on their limited processing resources. An alternative system, much like the monochrome system of radar screen was devised, where the ray scans between individual points along vectors, reducing the amount of time to plot data. Games using Vectorscan have a distinct wiry appearance and a spectral glow which is part of Tempest's character. Other titles using the system include Asteroids, Battlezone and the Vectrex home console from MB (now an expensive collector's item)

HIPPY TRIP

Jeff Minter made his Tempest update as much an experience as a game. The visuals are enhanced with swirling rainbow shading and the webs warp in 3D space against a tumbling starfield. Player skill is rewarded by huge scores and encouragements exploding out the screen, and also by a progression of power-ups. Power-ups originate from the explosion of an enemy and surge along the web towards you.



PARTICLE LASER

A more intense penetrating weapon but effective nonetheless.



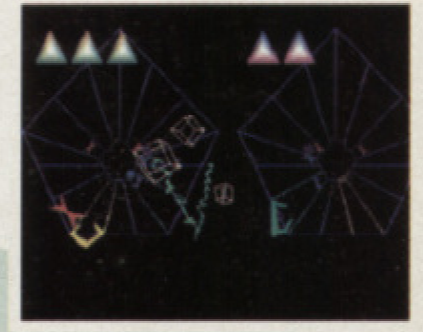
SUPER ZAPPER

A lethal charge which annihilates all other web life.



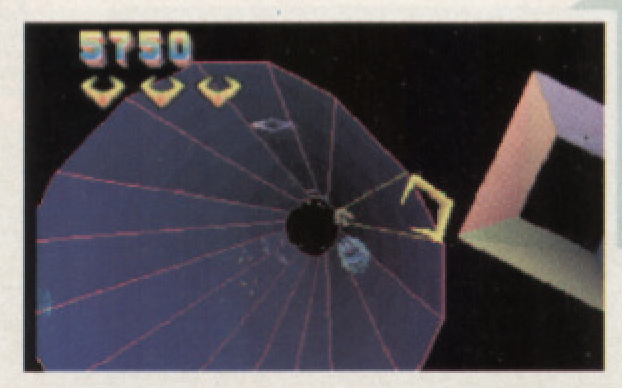
JUMP

The player can leap above the web and its dangers for a second.



DUEL

In an attempt to beef up the package, Tempest Duel is included. This is a two-player derivative of the main game, using two webs placed adjacently. Players attempt to catch each other in their line of fire over a series of short battle rounds.





JOURNEY TO ANYOONA

Minter added a series of bonus rounds of his own devising, accessed when the player collects a perfect set of power-ups across three separate webs. These balance the frantic action of the central game by being tranquil tests of skill. Players fly through a flowing ether, aiming to drift through a series of rings, or keep a trail of twinkling pixels on a stellar tunnel. Great, but they are not yet implemented on this Saturn version. As the rest of the game is notably faithful to the Jaguar edition, let's hope this will alter in the complete version.

THE INCREDIBLE HULK

The one thing that always puzzled me about both the Incredible Hulk comic books and the classic animated series was that Bruce Banner always wore the same purple trousers (or pants if you hail from the good old US of A) week after week. Did renowned gamma radiation scientist Bruce Banner get lumbered with a load of fire-damaged stock or is he just completely colour blind? Perhaps we'll never know. The good news though is that Eidos' forthcoming 3D smash-'em-up features Marvel's green hued hero complete with tasteless trousers.

DON'T MAKE ME ANGRY!

Boasting 3D SGI rendered graphics and fourteen action-packed levels, The Incredible Hulk is due to arrive on both Saturn and PlayStation just in time for the festive period. Some of you may recall the fairly dire 16 bit Hulk outing from a few years back that was basically a clichéd platform adventure as far removed from the its original source material as possible.



preview

Game Name	The Incredible Hulk
Publisher	Eidos
Developer	Silicon Dreams
Release	December



LOU FERRINGO

Players take on the role of the gamma-spawned creature himself and have to trash their way through enemy-infested levels, keeping an eye on their health and attempting to locate both the exit and various essential artifacts. The storyline loosely follows the plot of the recent Pantheon Saga that ran in The Incredible Hulk comic book a while ago. Fans of the series will be heartened to learn that such familiar faces The Leader, Abomination and the Hulk-busters also make their 32 bit debut.

BILL BIXBY

Currently featuring Loaded-style level layouts, breakable walls and floors, a host of evil minions and tight gameplay, The Incredible Hulk is shaping up to be a major comic book license. Hopefully the game will appeal to all Saturn owners, especially those desperate for a platform gaming fix.

PGA TOUR '97



Electronic Arts is nothing if not consistent. For the last few years now they've been regularly releasing updates of their popular sports titles. Fortunately most of these have been distinct improvements over past glories and added classic gameplay elements that have made the EA Sports label one of the most respected in this crazy video game industry. Now they present the latest version of their top selling golf sim, PGA Tour.

preview

Game Name	PGA Tour '97
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	Electronic Arts
Release	December

PLUS FOURS

As you might expect, PGA has several play options. Aside from a practice round and a regular eighteen hole game you can also tackle 'the Skins game'. We've never quite figured out why it's called this, but it does involve accumulating money based on the number of holes you win. Totally humiliate your fellow players and riches are assured. Unfortunately it's not real money. Damn!



PRINGLE SWEATERS

Although there are only two courses available in PGA '97, they are both presented in a photo realistic style. Because the Saturn renders each scene at the beginning of each shot, they can be viewed from any angle. There are also a selection of digitised players to choose from. Eight pros are on offer, including the wonderfully named Fuzzy Zoeller and there are eight amateur players who can be customised. You can give them silly names and arm them with your chosen selection of clubs before doing battle on the fairways. PGA Tour '97 is due for release early next year so keep your eyes peeled for an imminent review.

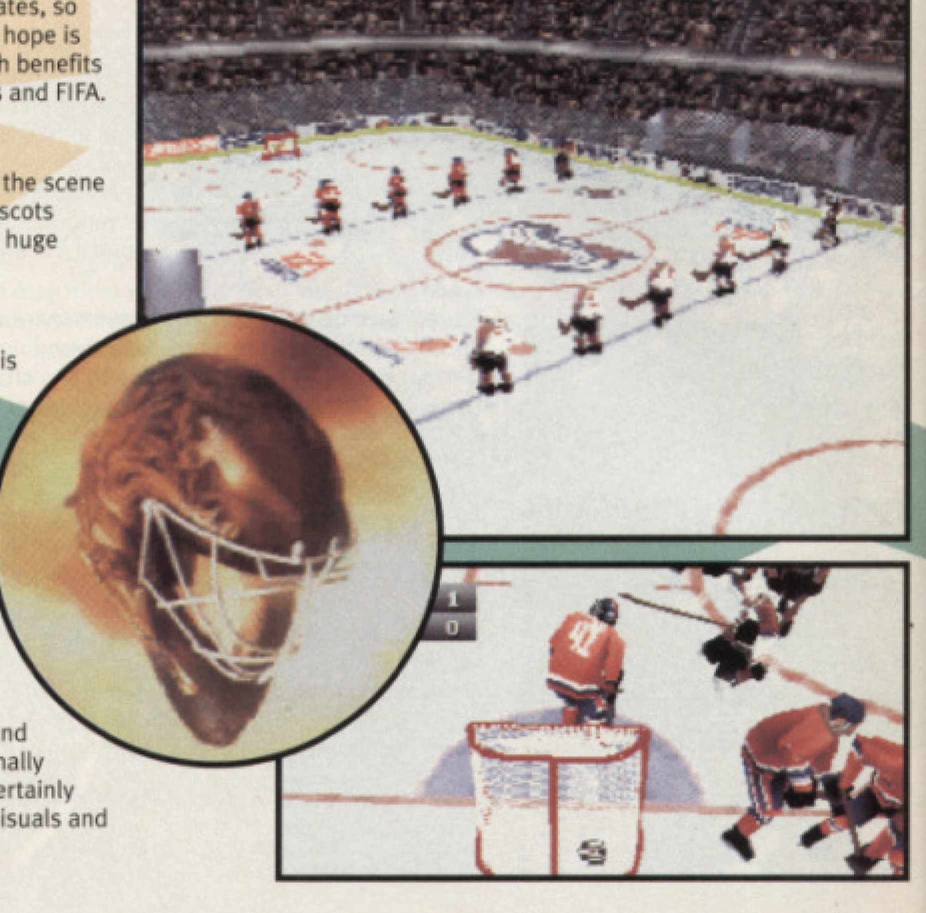


Is the Hulk really green all over? Yuck, that's gross!

preview	
Game Name	NHL '97
Publisher	Electronic Arts
Developer	Electronic Arts
Release	December

NHL '97

It's getting harder and harder to think up new intros for all these sports updates, so let's not bother eh? After all, if you don't know what the NHL series is, what hope is there for you? This is, however, the first update to hit the Saturn and as such benefits from the same zippy presentation and virtual stadium style as seen in Madden's and FIFA.



IT'S RIDICULOUS

We thought we'd seen everything after the intro to the latest Madden game, but the scene setter for NHL proves to be almost as OTT. Ferocious animals that form team mascots merge with revolving helmets as match footage plays in the background. Then a huge avalanche fills the screen. Criminy!



VIEW-O-RAMA

Past all this exuberance, there is still the same old game of ice hockey we all know and love. Except now there are a multitude of views included so you can observe the action from a variety of angles. Classic is the regular view from the Megadrive games, and this is supplemented by Classic Low and Classic High. Then there's Isometric, which gives you an old school FIFA viewpoint. Board, Luxury Box and Press Box are angles from the sidelines, each one higher up than the last and finally Helmet gives you a view from the helmet of the player in possession, which is certainly unique to say the least. Players can expect full league and team stats, smooth visuals and tight gameplay to be included when NHL '97 hits the ice this December.

preview	
Game Name	NBA Jam Extreme
Publisher	Acclaim
Developer	Sculptured Software
Release	December

NBA JAM EXTREME

NBA Jam was the title that really broke the conventions of video game basketball. Until then, games had never captured the lightning pace of the court and the swiftness of the changeover. But when Acclaim's licenses with Williams lapsed, we thought we'd seen the last NBA Jam game from them. Wrong! GT has the license to the NBA Hangtime coin-op, but seems in no hurry to bring forth a Saturn version, Acclaim has their own sub-licensed arcade game, which happily is almost ready.





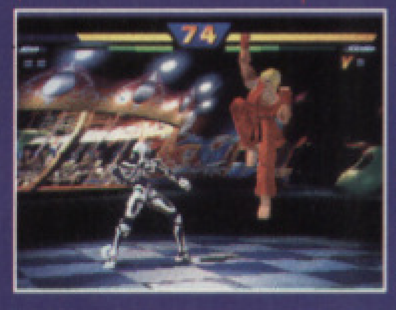
This is not merely an update of last year's Saturn NBA Jam TE. For the first time you have true 3D rendering for the court and players. The perspective is strange — it's 3D, but doesn't alter much from the left to right traditional NBA Jam viewpoint, except to accommodate the ludicrously high jumps and dunks fashioned with the Extreme button. The control system is the same as that of previous games; simple passing and shooting buttons, with a turbo button used for dunks. There is the addition of the Extreme button, which infuses your player with extra power and the ability to perform really outrageous moves. We'll bring you a full NBA Jam Extreme review next month.

ARCADIA

STREET FIGHTER EX

Although still early on in development this game was unveiled at the JAMMA show for the first time and so the curiosity of it's unique 2D/3D nature was enough to keep a permanent crowd huddled around the few machines available to play on. Obviously, first impressions were unfavourable because graphically it's still quite basic compared to other 3D games available. However, all those who played it agreed that the gameplay was something quite special and indeed seeing your favourite 2D Street Fighter characters battling in 3D is an amazing experience! Familiar faces include Ryu, Ken, Chun Li, Zangief and, in a surprise announcement from Capcom, Guile. Sonic boom!









Game Name	Batman Forever
Publisher	Acclaim
Developer	Acclaim
Release	January

BATMAN FOREVER



Last year's summer blockbuster, Batman Forever, not only renewed interest in the flagging movie series but also inadvertently kick-started a resurgence in videogame licensed film titles. As this issue shows, that trend is still going strong with both the good (Die Hard Trilogy) and the not-so-good (Casper) making an appearance. This preview section also contains Dragonheart: Fire and Steel which is published by Acclaim and which brings me neatly back to Batman Forever. Phew!

TO THE BATCAVE!

Unlike the shoddy Megadrive outing developer Iguana Entertainment (responsible for the likes of NBA Jam and the forthcoming N64 Doom-clone, Turok) have taken a different route with this game and produced a side scrolling beat-'em-up in the same vein as Streets of Rage or Final Fight. Expect massive characters and awesome effects.

MEN IN TIGHTS

It's certainly been a while since the Saturn has played host to the side scrolling intensity of a title such as Batman Forever and hopefully the finished game should prove to be a rewarding experience. Packed with special moves galore, incredible power-ups, record-breaking combos and the full approval of both Warner Bros. and DC Comics, Batman Forever should propel the Dark Knight Detective back into the spotlight once again.







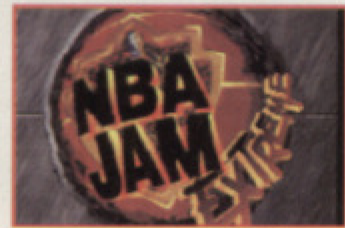


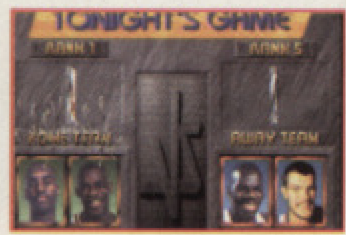
A MATTER OF RECORD

Entering your name is actually creating a three letter code to access your play record. Your progress against the 29 teams of the league are shown, with wins, losses and goal percentages. There are no tournament options, your opponents are selected on the basis of skill, each being a 'level' to overcome. As far as secrets go, let's just say that we've already uncovered a cool 'big head' mode and hopefully there are loads of hidden players as well.

SMOKIN'!

The greatest reward you can get for an extended run of points is to be 'smokin'. This is similar to NBA Jam fire where high scoring players were 'on fire' Three baskets in a row without a reply and the stuff starts rising from your player's feet. Rather than just look cool, your men now have permanent turbo charge, and the rather cheeky ability to goal tend (grab balls on target for the basket). This mode will persist until the other side gets one in.







ULTIMATE DOMAIN



Ultimate Domain uses Sega's Model 2 board to create a high quality 3D polygon fighting game. Although it uses the traditional 1 lever and 3 buttons Atlus is saying that it doesn't necessarily mean that the combat system is going to be simple so look out for the possibility of some interesting derivatives on the traditional Virtua Fighter style game. One of most important aspects of Ultimate Domain is the SOL-POWER feature. Although there are nodetails yet it would appear from the screenshots that the characters can utilise the sun's solar power to charge up lethal killing techniques. Unlike Dead or Alive or Fighter's Impact some of the characters in Ultimate Domain look quite monstrous indeed and the promise of a really original game is there.





Arnie as Mr Freeze in Batman and Robin? It'll be so cool.

preview

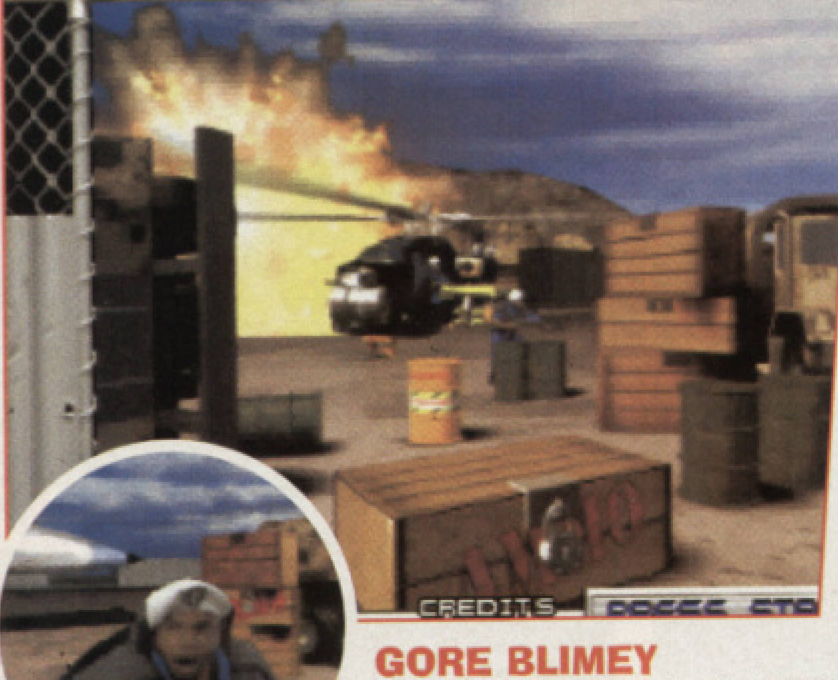
Game Name	Area 51
Publisher	GT Interactive
Developer	Tantalus
Release	TBA

AREA 51

POINT AND CLICK EXECUTION

Area 51 is just the latest game to support the Virtua Gun. Sega's excellent peripheral is pretty much essential in games of this type, although the Joypad is supported.

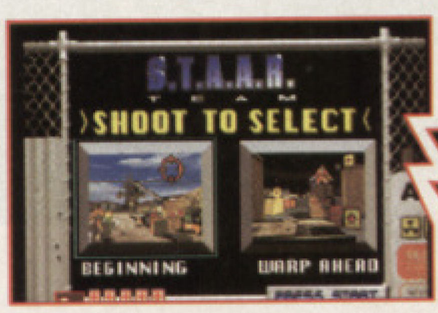
Williams' answer to Virtua Cop in the arcade (or Time Crisis, or any of the target shooters, if you will) has been Area 51. The whole 'Area 51 thing' has reached such ridiculous proportions that anything vaguely paranormal is being linked with the mysterious base in the Nevada desert, and both the Roswell video and Independence Day haven't done anything to lower the heat of inquiry on the US Military's biggest secret. Area 51 assumes, of course, that the place hasn't merely got an alien's tadger in a test tube, but that the whole place is swarming with the bloody things. You are one of a crack team of anti-alien commandos briefed with clearing out the infested base, and made to wear the kind of sad uniform Dixons' security guards have. America, the home of (ahem) discerning gameplayers is waiting for this one with the usual kind of blind fervour with which they greet any home-grown software (even if the home version has been sub-licensed to Brit firm, Perfect Development, and sub-contracted to Australian coders Tantalus) ha!





GORE BLIMEY

Williams has always been at the forefront of the gun-lovin', land of the free's commitment to the gore you want in your games. So even though you're killing aliens that look a bit like ugly soldiers, you can see that claret stuff spread everywhere. And if you don't want it, you can turn it off.

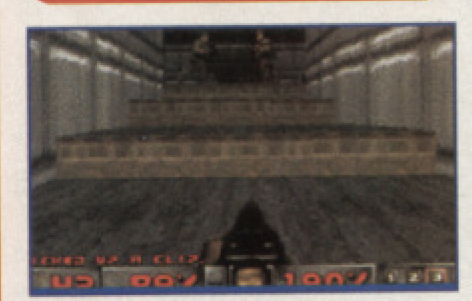




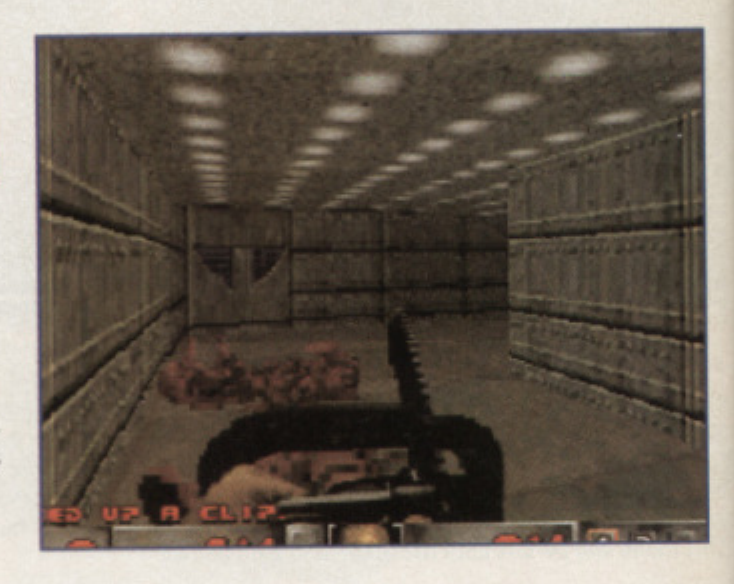
preview

Game Name	Doom
Publisher	GT Interactive
Developer	Rage
Release	December

DOOM



And finally, the Saturn version of Doom is at last finished. Although it arrived a little too late for a review this month, we'll be featuring it in all it's gory glory next issue. The disc contains both the Ultimate version of the first game as well as the Doom II levels, so there are over 50 blood-soaked stages to wade through. Having seen what the Saturn can do with 3D games like Exhumed, there's no reason why this conversion shouldn't be of the same quality. But with Quake currently stealing the limelight will this first person blaster still have as much appeal as it used to? Well you'll find out next month you impatient scally-wags.



ARCADIA





DEAD OR ALIVE

Also harnessing the power of the Model 2 arcade hardware is Tecmo's Dead or Alive, yet another 3D fighter in the same vein as Last Bronx. Due to receive the Saturn conversion treatment early next year, Dead or Alive is another third party coin-op utilising Sega's licensed technology. However, DoA appears to have taken a page out of Tekken's book as blocking is activated by pulling back on the Joystick. Further original touches include the addition of an explosive Danger Zone triggered when players manage to defeat their opponents.

DYNAMITE BASEBALL

What's this? A Sega sports game making an appearance in this month's beat-em-up dominated Arcadia? Yep, and the good news is that Dynamite Baseball is looking mighty hot. AM1 are responsible for this fast-paced, strike-scoring sports sim and from what we've seen this title just might make you look at baseball in a whole new light. Instead of dull sprite-based players, each character in Dynamite Baseball is in fact a 3D polygon construction combined with motion-capture to provide realistic and dynamic action. Players smash balls out of the stadium, steal bases and score runs with fluid movement.

preview

Game Name	Dark Saviour
Publisher	Sega
Developer	Climax
Release	January

DARK SAVIOUR

MEAN MACHINES nears the end of its Dark Saviour saga. After 12 months of rewrites, updates, putbacks and translations this little gem of an RPG is in an English language Beta form. Sadly, it will just miss a Christmas release, but discerning Saturn owners should save up their Christmas money, as Dark Saviour will be out towards the end of January. MEAN MACHINES discovered Dark Saviour last December at a small show in Tokyo. It's the work of a team who produced the Megadrive classic, Landstalker. It shares many of the gameplay aspects of Landstalker, and unusually for a Jap RPG, it has a strong arcade element. Climax have written their own game engine which they claim 'maxes' the Saturn polygon capability: their Hyperion 3-D perspective which displays scalable and rotatable backgrounds in realtime 3D. Our previous Dark Saviour features have concentrated on the technical aspects of the programming but we can finally reveal more of the plot.



STRANGE PARALLELS

The Dark Saviour story has been split into four chapters or 'parallels', that link the locations together. Each of these contains a massive game area and hours of gameplay, and the size allows the game to have a very gentle difficulty curve. Players take on the role of Garian, a bounty hunter on a mysterious quest.

THE MECHANICS

The weirdest aspect of Dark Saviour's world is the mix of fantasy and industrial element. Familiar puzzle elements of switches and pads found in RPGs mix with some wonderful mechanical contraptions. The graphical scale of some of these is immense.





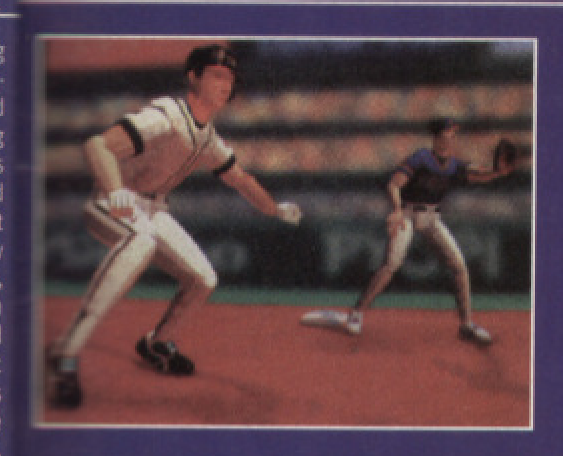








DIE HARD ARCADE



Confusion reigns over the release of Die Hard Arcade as it not only has no connection to the Fox Interactive title, Die Hard Trilogy, neither does it follow the plot of any of the three Bruce Willis movies. Well actually that's not strictly true. AM1's original coin-op experience takes the 'feel' of the first movie as players find themselves battling a legion of tricky terrorists who've taken over towering city block. The game features both a male and female hero and the action comes over as a cross between Virtua Fighter and a 3D Streets of Rage with weapon power-ups to collect and intensive hand-to-hand combat also on offer. Die Hard Arcade has had a limited release in the UK so far but Sega is promising a Saturn conversion sometime in '97.



Next month we'll preview AM2's Fighters Megamix!



1997



All together now: should auld, crap software be forgot and never brought to mind, should auld crap software be forgot through days of auld lang syne. We'll be putting all the crap behind us, celebrating the good stuff and looking forward to the next year in a Mystic Meg-style special feature. More immediate releases covered will be Dark Saviour, Doom, Soviet Strike, Die Hard Trilogy, Blast Chamber, BUG TOO!, Area 51, Krazy Ivan, NBA Jam Extreme, NHL '97, PGA '97. Features on Wild 9s, Jonah Lomu rugby, Fighters' Megamix and continuing Tip and Guide excellence in conjunction with that man Phil. See in the New Year with MEAN MACHINES SEGA!



(ONLY IN YOUR WILDEST DREAMS.)



